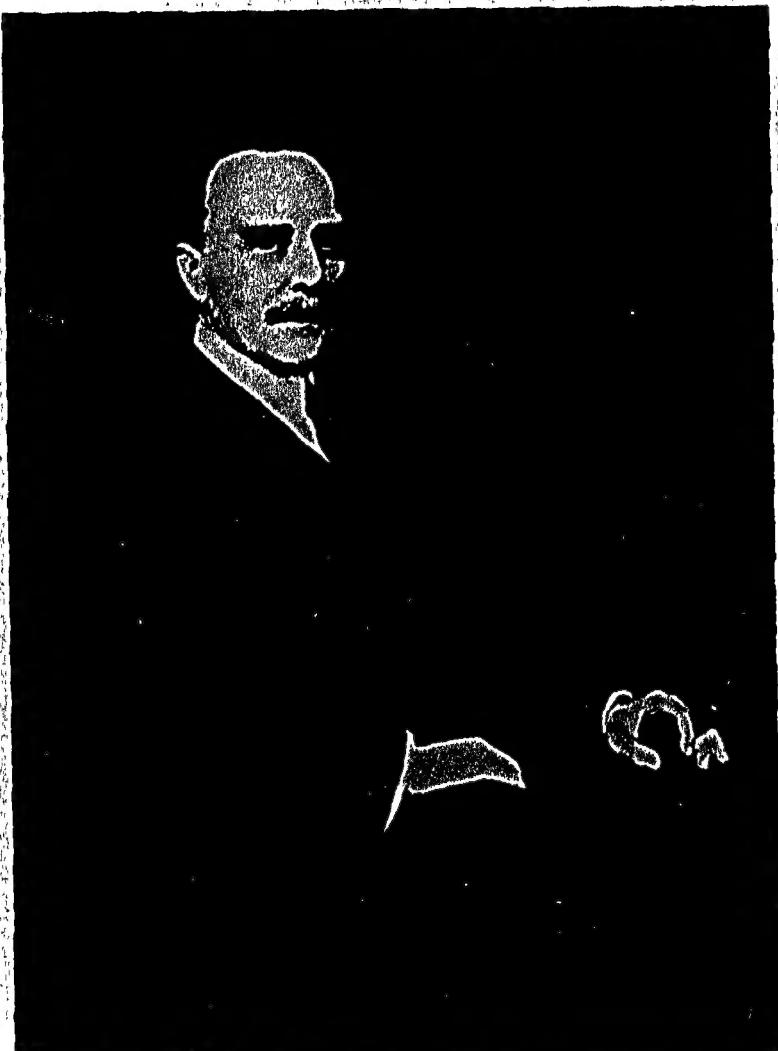


SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON





From a portrait by Edward Pötry, A.R.A., London
SIR AUGUSTUS MEREDITH NANTON

SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON

A Biography

BY

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"THE ROMANCE OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY"
ETC



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FOREWORD

ONLY once in a long while does there appear in the life of any country a man who, by the magnificence of his character, by his human qualities, and by his unselfish devotion, leaves a lasting impression upon those with whom he has come in contact. Such a man is remembered, not because of prominence in the press, but because of the respect, admiration and affection of those who are fortunate enough to have his friendship, and of the many more who knew him personally even though not intimately. Such a man was Sir Augustus Meredith Nanton.

I consider myself to be one of the fortunates who enjoyed his friendship over a period of years, and, during that period, neither myself nor anyone who knew him as I did, found in him any of the smallnesses which sometimes characterize even our most prominent men. There was nothing spectacular about Sir Augustus, no desire for notoriety, no apparent ambition for rank or position. One cannot imagine him striving to secure any advantage at the expense of one of his fellow men. He was content to work, and he was a tremendous worker, for his family, his friends and his fellow-citizens, without asking or desiring public or other recognition.

A man such as he, with a wholesome outlook on life, is inevitably a man of modest, almost retiring disposition. So obvious, however, was his manliness, his genuineness and his transparent honesty, that many men—in Western Canada particularly—came to know him in true perspective, and were able to appreciate

FOREWORD

him and his high personal qualities at their full value. It is not surprising, therefore, that on his death a poignant sense of loss was felt throughout the country; neither is it to be wondered that his memory is revered, and he himself considered to be an outstanding example of what a Canadian gentleman can be and can become. No greater tribute could be paid to any man than that paid him in the admiration cheerfully accorded him by all who knew him.

E. W. BEATTY.

MONTRAL.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	8
II.	STARTING OUT IN LIFE	9
III.	EARLY LETTERS FROM THE WEST	19
IV.	HOW THE OFFICE BUSINESS GREW	28
V.	THE WAR PERIOD	40
VI.	PERSONAL NOTES	61
VII.	TWO GREAT DIRECTORATES	71
VIII.	OTHER CONCERNS	85
IX.	ON LEAVING WINNIPEG	96
X.	CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS	109
XI.	CLOSING SCENES	116



ILLUSTRATIONS

Sir AUGUSTUS MEREDITH NANTON	<i>Frontispiece</i>
(From a portrait by Edward Patry, A.R.A., London)	
FACING PAGE	
A FAMILY GROUP—ABOUT 1872	12
AUGUSTUS MEREDITH NANTON, AT VARIOUS PERIODS	14
CORNER PORTAGE AVENUE AND MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG, 1889	20
PRESENT OFFICE OF OSLER, HAMMOND AND NANTON, CORNER PORTAGE AVENUE AND MAIN STREET, WIN- NIPEG	20
SIR AUGUSTUS, WITH HIS THREE SONS—EDWARD, PAUL AND AUGUSTUS, 1914—AT LAKE OF THE WOODS	68
GROUP OF INVALID SOLDIERS AT "THE NANTON HOME", LAKE OF THE WOODS	68
SIR AUGUSTUS MEREDITH NANTON, 1920	76
A GROUP OF CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY DIRECTORS	82
ON WORLD CRUISE, AT TOKYO	82
SIR AUGUSTUS AND LADY NANTON	94
"THE NANTON HOME", LAKE OF THE WOODS	98
"KILMORIE", WINNIPEG — SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON'S RESIDENCE	98
SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON WITH ONE OF HIS DAUGHTERS	98

SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

EVERY man who has a moral background and who is intelligent enough to be responsible for his actions will endeavour to live up to his ability and opportunity. Few things are more demoralizing to a man than the wilful withholding of himself from a sincere desire and purpose to do his share of the world's work. But when we concede these manifest truths, we must be prepared to find that, because all men have not equal gifts and talents, there will be, all around us, different levels of individual achievement. The main thing to bear in mind is that when any man does his work according to his powers and opportunities he is fulfilling his destiny, and he deserves our respect and admiration.

It is because many unthinking people forget these facts that they imagine that any man who rises in the business world and acquires considerable substance is thereby shown to be anxious for worldly gain. This idea is fallacious in regard to any man with a conscience, who has so advanced to prosperity. He has simply striven to work up to his capacity and to use his talents and powers accordingly. If a man with that ability suppresses conscience, he will be a harmful force in human society. But, if he hearkens to the inner voice, he becomes a beneficent force in developing the country in which he lives and in making the roadway of life easier for others who, while honestly doing their work, have not his powers and talents.

To hosts of prosperous men money-making is a wholly secondary thing. They have little personal use for it, except in so far as it enables them to find scope for their ability to develop the country and the concerns on which they and others are dependent.

In the course of a somewhat extended experience amongst men,—farmers, soldiers, cowboys, police, railway builders, business men and the rest—I have discovered that, in all classes, there are to be found mainly men who despise meanness. And wherever one meets men of that kind, one finds the same desire to use whatever powers they possess to the full extent of their ability, with courage, steadfastness and determination. All such men are of kingly mould, no matter how their talents and achievements differ.

It is quite clear that we are not all gifted and endowed in the same way. In fact, no two people are alike. The Creator loves variety, or all the flowers would be alike and the whole earth would be a dreary, commonplace sameness. Gifts of public speech or song, or a genius for art or invention and such like are quite generally recognized as gifts of Divine origin, but it is equally true that the talent for conducting a successful business and acquiring substance is similarly bestowed. In the oldest and most authoritative Book in the world, and very early in that Book, it is said: "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee the power to get wealth." The meaning of this and many other passages is that all the powers we possess involve responsibility to the Giver for the right use of what He has given each of us. All gifts are bestowed for the ultimate good of mankind and are to be used. Hence we are totally remiss in our duty unless we cultivate and develop and use to our

full capacity the talents we possess. It is by such activity that the world is benefitted and human society helped. Most of us have a talent for something, and a New Testament parable has seathing words of rebuke for the man who buried his talent instead of using and developing it in the service of God and men. In another great passage of the Old Testament, there is a fine verse saying: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men." Such a man is fit for the company of kingly men and is not appreciated by men who have stunted their soul-growth by living on the lower levels and plains of selfishness.

It has been my rare good fortune to witness the vast changes which have come over the western prairies within the memory of living men. I was born in Kildonan, the famous Lord Selkirk colony, at a time when the fringes of settlement along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers were the lonely advance guards of civilization, and I have witnessed the transformation from log cabins and tents to swarming cities and a populated countryside. These amazing changes were made possible by the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which made Confederation a reality by bringing the Northwest into direct contact with the comparatively populous and wealthy eastern provinces. Hence I saw the inrushing throngs, most of them young men, many of them fated to fall by the wayside, some of them destined to become the leaders of the West.

Amongst those young men who came to Winnipeg in the early eighties was Augustus Meredith Nanton, clear-eyed, with the well-built figure of an athlete and a consuming desire to be worthy of the trust which had been placed in him by those whose interests he had

come to represent. He came to Winnipeg at a most difficult time. The wild boom which had arisen when the railway was at hand had collapsed, fortunes had crashed on every side, and many excellent men who deserved better things, as well as many more of the other kind, found themselves ruined by the sudden deflation. It was a time when a young man like Nanton might have become discouraged, but he had the vision and the balance to see that this depression was merely a temporary halt in the successful development of this great new land, and he concentrated all his energies on building up the important business which he had been sent out to establish.

It is a far cry from that difficult day in Winnipeg to the last conversation which I had with Nanton in Vancouver on the occasion of his last visit here before his passing away. He had travelled far in the forty years that had elapsed since I first met him. He had become a front-rank man in his generation. He was a recognized authority in the business world, a man whose counsel was eagerly sought by others, both at home and abroad. His self-denying, incessant and wonderfully effective work during the years of the War, as well as his remarkable services in developing the new West of Canada, had been deservedly recognized and rewarded by the bestowal of knighthood at the hands of his Sovereign. But that day, here in Vancouver, when I last saw Sir Augustus, it was a difficult time again in the business world. The Great War was over, but it had dislocated business and thrown it out of joint. The sword had cut the delicate threads of international credits and the ends were hanging loose. The whole problem of investments was disturbing in the extreme, and incomes were shrinking. At the time of that last conversation with Sir

Augustus, I had no thought of writing this appreciation, as I had no idea but that he would live for many years. But my most distinct impression that day in Vancouver was so clear that it still remains indelible. The essential thing in Nanton's life, his faithfulness to a trust reposed in him, had not changed in all those years. I gathered that from his conversation, though he did not say it in so many words. But I felt that amid the aftermath confusion caused by the War, he was exerting himself beyond his strength to see that no one who had entrusted funds or estates to him would lose anything if he could prevent it. The burden he was carrying successfully for others must assuredly have been so heavy that he took little thought of himself till his health was undermined beyond the possibility of recuperation.

To contemporaries who were mere onlookers in the commercial world, Sir Augustus may have appeared pre-eminently as a man of unusual business capacity. To those who knew him best and who have had access to his personal correspondence, he exemplified not only tremendous business power, but also, in an extraordinary degree, the quality which the New Testament calls "stewardship". His powers and his possessions were held in trust for the welfare of others. A biography or a press report might reveal something of his large public benefactions, though he disliked publicity in these matters if it could be avoided. But his helpfulness was really so wide and so unobtrusive that the account of it cannot be secured in this present world. The full record is in higher keeping.

In a brief postscript to a business letter written to the firm of Osler, Hammond & Nanton, just after his death, I read the other day these words: "Deeply regret the loss of Sir Augustus. A personal kindness

to me marked him in my mind as the first gentleman in Canada." The writer of this tribute was a farmer who had seen much struggle through the years, from various unavoidable causes. To him Sir Augustus had evidently come with personal help in a critical hour, though there is no business record of this anywhere. The postscript revealed the fact, but gave no details. The reference eloquently indicates a deed symptomatic of Nanton's whole life. Quite recently, I called on a man in Winnipeg, who said, "Nanton and I were young lads in the same office in Toronto. We were fond of the outdoor life on the bay or in the woods when we were free from duty. And many a time when he knew I wanted to go on some special outing, he would say, 'You need to get away more than I do; you go ahead and catch the boat—I will stay and finish up your work for you.' " And this man added, "He has always been like that. I never knew anyone like him." Many others have spoken to me to the same general effect, some of them with tears in their eyes, and their voices shaking with emotion.

It is concerning this outstanding but unassuming man that the following record is written. Sir Augustus died at a comparatively early age by our ordinary measurement, but that is no indication of the extent of his achievement. The lessons of his life are sorely needed in these difficult times. They point the way to the heights of that success which becomes a blessing to many others as well as a joy to the individual who has earned it.

CHAPTER II

STARTING OUT IN LIFE

Accusres NANTON had in him the power to be aggressive and was possessed of a courageous determination when the occasion called for the exercise of these qualities. If things were going wrong, he lost no time in trying to put them right. An incident typical of this frame of mind was related to me recently by a mutual friend.

He says he was walking with Nanton up to the latter's office in Winnipeg a few years ago when they came to a knot of people who were watching two rather powerful-looking foreigners starting to fight in a doorway. No one seemed inclined to interfere with these formidable aliens, who looked dangerous. But when Nanton came abreast of the pair, he stepped up quickly to the bigger man and, as the foreigners paused, Nanton said to the man whose arm he had caught firmly, "Come with me". The fighters, though not knowing the new arrival, noted his decisive tone and manner, and desisted at once. The free man went one way and Nanton, keeping hold of the other, took him the other way for a block and then said goodbye, telling the astonished foreigner to keep on going and not to fight on the streets again. This incident shows that although naturally disliking publicity, Nanton's action was the spontaneous expression of a mental attitude which was so opposed to anything discreditable that he would not hesitate to rebuke it. But, as a rule, these forces of aggressiveness were latent

rather than apparent on the surface. In manner and bearing he was courteous, but reserved. He had his own opinions and views in a very pronounced way, but he did not press them on others or even state them unless some good purpose was to be served by his so doing. Then he did not hesitate to express himself firmly and clearly. In short, he was unostentatious in practically every way, and was far more disposed to decline honours than to accept them. If honours came his way, as they did, it was not because he sought them, but because others, knowing his merits, gave him the proper acknowledgment of his services.

Hence I imagine that there are very few even of his intimate friends who know that Nanton came of a family which has played an honourable and at times a distinguished part in England's history from the remote days of the Norman Conquest. A direct ancestor, Sir Robert Naunton, was a Secretary of State to both Queen Elizabeth and King James I, and a book which he wrote, entitled *Fragmenta Regalia*, is still regarded by students of the period as an important source of information. The family seat was Letheringham Abbey in Suffolk, and while only a portion of the house remains to-day, the chapel is in an excellent state of preservation and contains the tombs of Sir Robert Naunton and other members of the family.

Nevertheless, Augustus Nanton was not born to riches; in fact he was born to what may be described as comparative poverty. Poverty is no crime, and, like riches, is an acid test to distinguish between the real and the counterfeit in human life. Nanton came through the test most honourably. Throughout his life he was the same man, unaffected by surroundings, neither discouraged by poverty nor spoiled by riches.

The fact that Nanton was born in comparatively poor worldly circumstances, but of good stock, only brought out his strength and courage. He had the spirit of the Norman knight who had engraved on his battle axe the words: "I either find a way or make one". When Nanton started out in life, he did not find a way ready for him. But he made one and travelled it to power and influence for the general good.

He was born in Toronto in 1860, son of Daniel Augustus Nanton and his wife, Mary Louisa, second daughter of William Botsford Jarvis, who was widely known and highly respected as High Sheriff of the district. Sheriff Jarvis and his wife about a century ago named their country estate "Rosedale". This in later years developed into a beautiful section of the city, with fine homes and winding roads, but it still retains the name "Rosedale" given it by the original occupants.

Daniel Augustus Nanton was born at sea, his father holding a prominent administrative position in the West Indies. He was educated at Eton and Oxford and was called to the bar in Toronto on September 2nd, 1852. He was associated with Sir A. T. Galt and moved to practice in Cobourg, where he died at the early age of forty-two, leaving his wife and a family of five young children, one other having died in infancy. In consequence, his wife had to face the necessity of making a living for herself and family until they would be able to help themselves. She moved back to Toronto where she had wide acquaintance, and where there would be better opportunity. She was highly educated, having attended schools not only at home, but in France and other countries abroad, and she resolved to open a private school, which she

enriched on with great success for many years. It was not easy work for her, but the example of a courageous, self-denying and devoted life which she gave her family made a lasting impression upon them. There is in the Book of Proverbs a description of such a noble woman. In this description are the beautiful words, "Her children shall rise up and call her blessed." This was the text chosen by the sons and daughters of Mrs. Daniel Augustus Nanton for the tablet which they erected in her memory in later years.

The names of these sons and daughters in order of age will be of interest, and are as follows:—

Harry William Nanton, born Toronto, March 8th, 1856, educated at Upper Canada College, died in Winnipeg in 1915, a member of the firm of Osler, Hammond and Nanton.

Mary Rosalie Nanton, born in Toronto, died in London, England, October 1918, widely travelled and an artist.

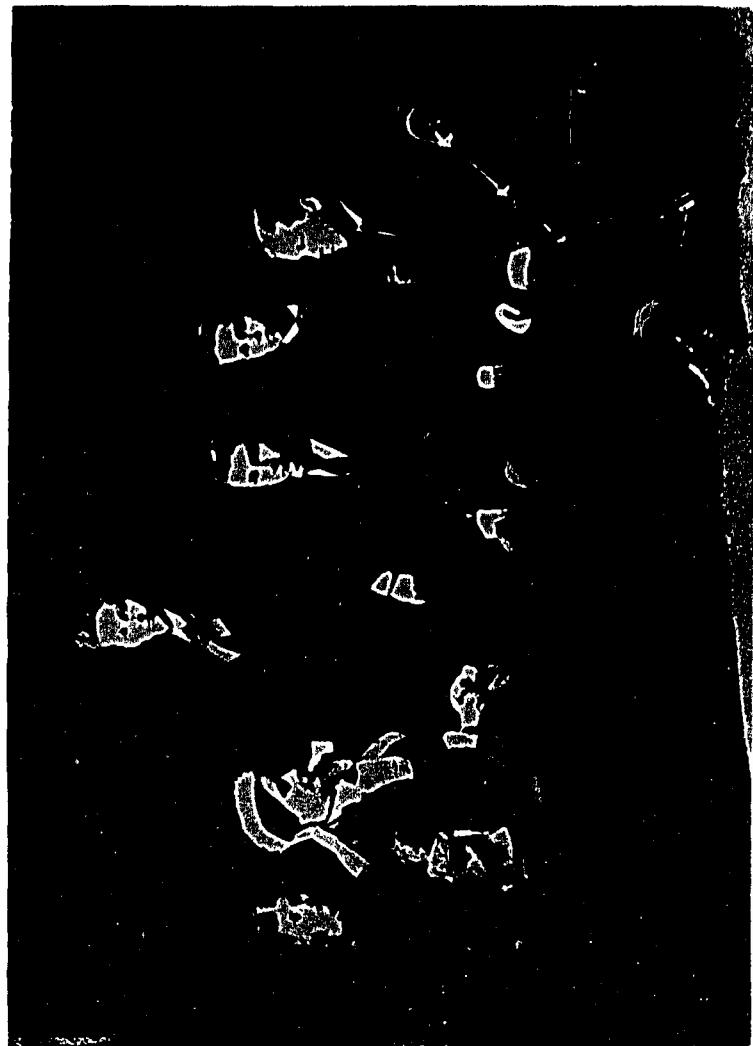
John George Nanton, died in infancy.

Augustus Meredith Nanton, the subject of this present writing, born in Toronto, May 7, 1860, died in Toronto, April 24th, 1925.

Herbert Colborne Nanton, born in Cobourg July 21st, 1863, a distinguished soldier in many Empire wars, now living retired in Victoria, B.C., with the rank of Brigadier-General and many decorations.

Lillian Caroline Nanton (later Mrs. John Davison Clark), now living in Victoria, B.C.

When thirteen years old, Augustus Nanton resolved to leave the Model School in Toronto, in order to get some work that would help him to support himself and to assist his mother and sisters. He was pretty young and many a boy of his age would consider that he had a right to spend the main share of his salary



A FAMILY GROUP—ABOUT 1872
Left to right—Lillian Caroline, Mrs. J. D. Clark; Mrs. Daniel Augustus Stanton; Mary Rosalie Stanton,
Harry William Stanton; Herbert Gilmore Stanton; Augustus Werordith Stanton.

on himself, but not so this lad. He got a position with Pellatt & Osler, in their brokerage business, for which he received three hundred dollars a year. This probably was all that a boy of his age could expect in those days. And out of it young Nanton, as we find from his letters, not only tried to make the lot of his mother easier, but looked for ways in which he could be of assistance to the others of the family. When a law firm wrote to his mother about an obligation that had not been met, the lad replied that though it could not be collected by ordinary process, he would assume it and pay so much a month on it till fully discharged, a suggestion which the law firm wisely accepted. He saw it through, as a final receipt indicates.

But Augustus had the desire to help his brother, Herbert, to enter the Royal Military College at Kingston, and so he looked around for some means to add to his \$300 a year income. He found a grocer who wanted a boy to clean up the store after business hours and then sleep under the counter occasionally as a sort of guard at night. Nanton was delighted to do these things and out of the two hundred a year which he got from the grocer he was able to carry out the plan he had in view. Curiously enough, when I was recording this self-efacing practice of the boy, I came across a letter written to this same Nanton, when he was a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway, by Lord Shaughnessy, the President of the Road. It is well known that Lord Shaughnessy regarded Nanton not only with profound respect, but with esteem and affection. It appears that Nanton, who had been in the East on railway and other business, was anxious to return home at the first opportunity, as Christmas was at hand. When he went to the ticket office to make a reservation, he found that the only

accommodation available was an upper berth in the sleeper. He could have made other arrangements more in keeping with his position as a director of the Company, but he did not wish to trouble anyone, and so took an upper berth on a crowded car to Winnipeg. This became known to Shaughnessy, and he wrote to Nanton a brief letter full of affectionate reproof, which I quote: "I was glad to learn that you went home from Toronto in an upper berth. These meek, lowly, humble, backward individuals should pay the penalty once in a while. You knew that the 'Lethbridge' was here, and at your disposal. Why did you not telegraph, like a man with some sense? Meanwhile I trust that you and your family will have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year." The incident is a very fine one. It shows that the director of the Canadian Pacific Railway who slept in an upper berth in order not to inconvenience anybody, had not changed from the boy who slept under a grocery counter at night in order to help his brother.

However, Nanton, the boy, soon got beyond the grocery counter stage because he was persistent, willing and competent. Changes in business led to his going with Osler and Hammond, and his readiness to help anyone at any time, regardless of office hours, made him a favourite in the office. At the same time he was no recluse, but was steadily building up his strength in the exercises of outdoor life. All his life he loved canoeing, rowing, sailing and horse-back riding, and he was at this stage developing the rowing power with the Argonaut Club which made him a conspicuous figure in later days with the Winnipeg Rowing Club. The expression was used of him by one of his rowing companions some years ago, "Nanton al-



Aged 4 years.



Aged 14 years.



AUGUSTUS MEREDITH NANTON
About 1905



ways pulled his weight". In other words, he never failed to do his share and that was true of him all through life. He did not overlook his duties to the State either, but joined the Queen's Own, took his full part in every detail of service and attained the rank of sergeant before leaving Toronto for the Northwest.

Between himself and Mr. E. B. Osler there arose a strong personal tie. Osler was, of course, one of the noted family, children of the Rev. F. L. and Mrs. Osler. The Oslers became famous in their several avocations as men of great ability and of the utmost reliability, and when Mr. Osler decided on the extraordinary step of taking Nanton into partnership at the age of twenty-three, and sending him to the new city of Winnipeg to establish a branch of their important business, he must have been very sure of his man. However, Nanton had become thoroughly initiated into Osler's old-fashioned, conservative ideals of doing business and never departed from them when he went to the sanguine and rather too venturesome new West. Nanton's attitude towards Mr. Osler was a case of hero-worship in the business world, and under similar conditions on both sides, one would like to see it more extensively practised. And one cannot think of young Nanton's remarkable promotion without recalling the words of a writer who once said: "How much easier our work would be if we put forth as much effort in trying to improve the quality of it as most of us do trying to find excuses for not properly attending to it." This is a very wise saying, applicable to every one who has work of any kind to do. Nanton proved its truth. His ability was undoubted and his industry unbounded, but he was his own severest judge. He never looked for excuses for not

attending to his work, because he always attended to it. And because he thought that anything worth doing at all was worth doing well, he aimed from the first at improving the quality of his work, for the sake of his work and for the sake of others, as well as for the purpose of strengthening himself for the doing of better work as time went on and as new opportunities opened up before him.

The immediate cause of sending him to Winnipeg was the desire of Osler and Hammond to secure new fields for the investment of the large sums of money entrusted to them by their clients in Scotland. These experienced business men had a vision of what the West was to be, despite the temporary depression prevailing in the early 'eighties, after the unjustified inflation commonly known as the Winnipeg boom. Accordingly, they selected Augustus Nanton and sent him to Winnipeg to study the situation and report back to Toronto headquarters. Hence, in 1883, we find him in the new city of the West at a period when great care had to be exercised regarding investments and at a time when there were, alas, some transients who were more than ready to impose on others for the sake of gain. It was a critical hour for a young man, but it was also an hour of tremendous opportunity, and Nanton, cool and able and with clear judgment, saw it all. He was not going to do any wild-catting and so he withstood all efforts to draw him in that direction. But he saw the greatness of the future of the country still at the beginning, and he determined to have a worthy share in its development. Accordingly, he went back to Toronto in the autumn of 1883 and reported to the firm.

His report was prepared with that minute care and clear judgment which even at that early age was dis-

tinently characteristic of this rising business man. The men in the firm and connected with its enterprises had learned to trust him for these qualities and for his absolute reliability. His report urged action as early as possible in the way of sending a representative to the wide west land. In the opinion of the firm, Nanton was the man to whom to entrust this exceedingly important undertaking. No other was ever considered.

It was not easy or simple for him to leave home. He was very deeply devoted to his own people. Nor was it a light thing to part from the companions of his school and early business days. There was a singularly strong attachment between him and those early friends which, as we know, lasted to the end of his life. But there was the desire of his friends in the firm, to whom he was profoundly loyal, and there was also the beckoning of a great opportunity from the vast western part of Canada, calling for the best to come and develop her greatness and saying:

Give me men to match my mountains,
Give me men to match my plains,
Men with kingdoms in their thinking,
And with Empires in their brains.

There would be no space to chronicle here all the farewell gatherings amongst his youthful friends, as Nanton was preparing to leave Toronto for the West. But the following address, inscribed inside the cover of a gold watch given to him by the signatories, presents an extraordinary galaxy of the names of noted men paying tribute to this young lad who was going forth to be their representative and partner in a new enterprise:—

To A. M. Nanton, Esq.,
Secretary,
North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Company.

Dear Sir:—

We do not wish you to leave Toronto to accept well-merited promotion in the service of the Company without bearing with you some token to remind you constantly of the warm friends you have left behind. We have worked together with you for years, ever appreciating the pleasant nature of our daily business relations, always admiring the singleness of purpose which has marked your management of the large business interests which have been entrusted to your care. We part now with great regret but with honest and sincere wishes for your future welfare and with many hopes that you may live to attain that success which you so well deserve.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) Edmund B. Osler, J. Austin, R. H. Bethune, Charles Moss, H. C. Hammond, N. W. Hoyle, W. G. Falconbridge, Walter Barwick, J. W. Henderson, A. B. Aylesworth, W. S. Andrews, W. J. Franks, S. B. Sykes, James E. Lees, A. M. Stow, Percy A. Bath, George E. Ford.

Toronto, 9th April 1884.

Thus it was that A. M. Nanton, who had caught the vision of the future, came to cast in his lot with

A vast new land half wakened to the wonder
Of mighty strength; great level plains that hold
Unmeasured wealth and the prophetic thunder
Of triumphs yet untold.

A land of eager hearts and kindly faces
Lit by the glory of a newborn day,
Where every eye seeks the far distant places
Of an untravelled way.

Oh, generous land; oh, mighty inspiration
That floods the morning of the world to be,
Thy people are the builders of a nation
Lofty, benignant, free.

CHAPTER III

EARLY LETTERS FROM THE WEST

I HAVE before me Mr. Nanton's earliest personal letter book in which, according to the fashion of earlier times, his letters were copied by the pressure of an iron plate screwed down upon another with the book and its dampened leaves in between. I knew this process well by personal use in my law student days, and so this book with Nanton's own handwriting has a familiar and appealing atmosphere about it.

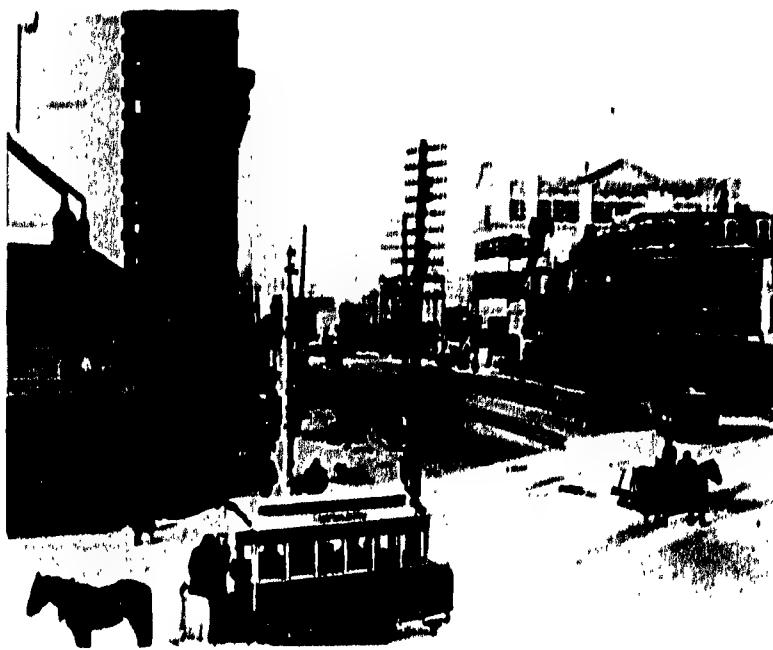
The letters were written mostly from the West to the East in the first few years of his work in Winnipeg, although a few of them were written in Toronto before he left for the North West, as it was then so generally called. Nothing in writing is so indicative of a man as his personal letters. Hence, with due regard to the amenities, I would like in this chapter to draw some deductions from the correspondence.

First of all, let me say that Nanton wrote a beautiful hand, in a way that is becoming one of the lost arts. There is a flowing ease about his penmanship which suggests clarity of mind, and there is a fine decision about his signature which declares mental firmness and strength. A second general remark I would like to make about these early letters is that they reveal a judgment in regard to the situation and the future of the new country to which he had come, which is nothing short of astonishing. Those of us who had been born in the West and had, in a way, made some study of its rise and progress, were immensely bene-

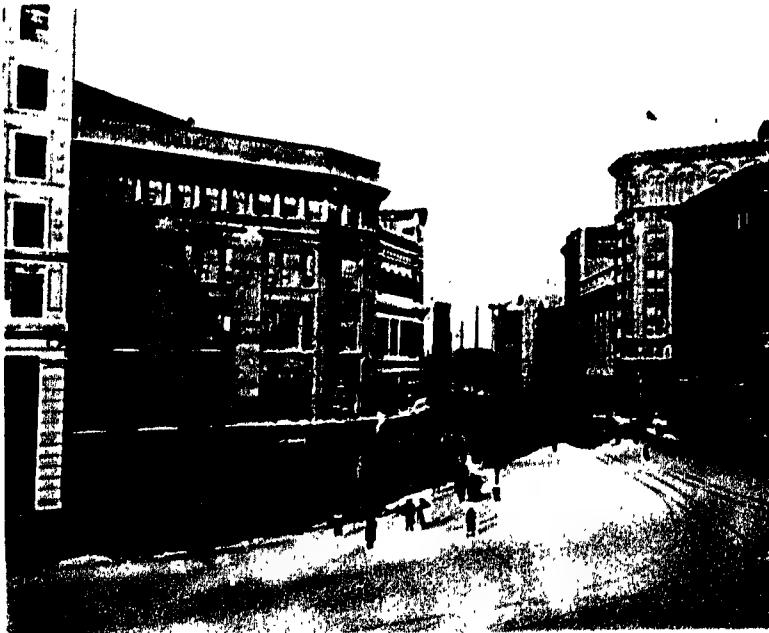
fitted, as was the country itself, by the coming and the activity of a young man so full of optimistic outlook, but yet so determined to keep his feet on the ground of legitimate enterprise. When Nanton came to the West in 1883 to explore and report to the Toronto office, the country was full of the wreckage caused by the boom that had just passed. The victims of the "boom" were legion and they were cursing the country as of no use. The recoil was such that many, misled by the disappointed and the broken, were ready to throw up their hands in despair. But young Nanton kept his head and proceeded to investigate for himself.

And one can imagine how, in that summer of 1883, Nanton saw things at first hand. The Canadian Pacific, the pioneer steel trail across Canada, was making its way across the great plains westward from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains, and some branch lines were being thrust out to the south and to the north from the main line. Nanton travelled on these lines, but they had not been built as far into the country as he wished to go, and so he travelled many miles by buckboard or in the saddle, camping at night under the canopy of the sky. And all the time he was studying the country so that he wrote back such description and prophecy to Osler & Hammond in the East that, at the age of twenty-three, when some young men have hardly started, he was sent back to Winnipeg by these able men to found there a branch business of the House for Western Canada.

So, doing everything possible to make his mother comfortable, he returned to Winnipeg in 1884. It was characteristic of him to write back to Mr. Pellatt of the old firm with which he had started to work in Toronto, expressing regret that he had not been able to see him before leaving Toronto, and thanking Mr.



CORNER OF PORTAGE AVENUE AND MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG, 1889.
Osler, Hammond and Nanton Office in Right Foreground.



PRESENT OFFICES OF OSLER, HAMMOND AND NANTON AT CORNER
PORTAGE AVENUE AND MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG

Pellatt for kindness shown him in the difficult days of beginning as a boy. I emphasize this, because a good many men, in the thrill of the promotion and the responsibility of new work, would have forgotten this gracious act. But, all through life, Nanton had an intense appreciation of any act or word of kindness.

Those of us who were born in the vicinity and who saw the straggling village, later called Winnipeg, growing up around old Fort Garry, recall the pride we had in coming into touch with modern developments. But as we look back we have to confess that the Winnipeg to which young Nanton came in 1883 must have been appallingly unattractive to one who had come from the life and comfort of an eastern city. The town planner had not then been born in the west, with his ideas of symmetry in the outlines of what would become a city. And so we recall the rambling main street of Winnipeg, bending as it had followed the old cart trail from the Red River settlement to Fort Garry. The bend, which was taken to cross a creek, is still visible near the city hall. Those who first built on either side of the old trail did not think that some day it would be a street that would require paving of some kind, but those early builders wanted a wide enough road where they would not have to travel in the mud without the opportunity of avoiding the pitfalls of someone who had just gone ahead, and so Main Street got its expensive width.

In the early days to which we refer, a road branched off the main trail, which led to the Fort, and this road went westward to Portage La Prairie and "the Saskatchewan", as the wide land towards the mountains was then generally called. This Portage road, as I remember it, was, if possible, worse than the main trail for mud and mire during the rainy periods. The

mud is a painful and sticky memory to those of us who recall it, although as boys we managed to enjoy getting through it. The main street became worse as travel increased and churned it up. And it became worse still when early Solons tried to improve things by grading it up in the centre. This only made the mud deeper and far worse than an ordinary prairie trail whenever rain came. There were no sidewalks for quite a while except two logs outside "Dutch George's Hotel". But these logs were round and when wet mud was trailed over them they became difficult of navigation for any man who had indulged in the hotel refreshments. He generally had to be fished out of the mud by some passer-by, who might need help himself some day. However, the citizens, discovering that the depth of Manitoba mud was something to be proud of when it became the producer of the most famous wheat of its day, grew so proud of it that they began to invent stories showing the brighter side of things. It was no invention to say that wagons were hopelessly mired on those streets, with the mud solid between the spokes and the wheels down to the hubs, for I saw that many a day myself. But another well known story was looked on generally as a distinct exaggeration even though in the direction of possible truth. It was about a citizen who, crossing the street one day, picked up a hat, only to find under it that there was a man pushing his way through the mud. To the citizen who asked the man if he was not afraid to get stuck, the man replied that he was on horse-back and would get through!

But a great change has been wrought since that day. The Portage road is now Portage Avenue, the great retail store street of the city and a source of pride to all citizens. Other great streets, beautiful drives,

boulevards and parks are now in evidence, where, in the old days, a general treeless waste of prairie and swamp was manifest to the passer-by. I wonder whether we think enough about the pioneer, who came in early years, enduring great hardships, and beginning the transformation which some of us have witnessed with our own eyes.

Settling down to work in Winnipeg, young Nanton wrote to Mr. Osler, telling him that he had secured a good office in a prominent location, because he thought it was good business to do so. Later on, however, he wrote again saying that as the business was only beginning, perhaps the head office might think that the monthly rental of \$50.00 which he was paying was too much. However, the head office agreed that it would be all right. The business must be properly launched and would not mind that overhead. All of which, taken together with the present, is a tribute to Nanton's foresight and his unceasing energy, for the firm occupies now a splendid building of its own on the most prominent business corner in Winnipeg.

In his letters to Osler & Hannaond (sometimes they are written to one or the other, and sometimes to the firm), Mr. Nanton indicates activity in letting people know about this new financial house, which is to make loans or to buy debentures or to do anything else necessary to secure business in a proper way.

He secured voters' lists from all over the West and got in touch with names and places. He prepared folders and had them put into the hands of newcomers. He was evidently willing to work overtime, because he wrote to his uncle in Toronto and said, "I expect to spend ten or twelve hours a day in my office".

Through the years after 1870 when the new order of Canadian control came into being, Winnipeg and

the country generally felt the incoming movement of settlers from the East. They came mainly from Ontario through the United States. But ten years almost elapsed before the whistle of the locomotive was heard in Winnipeg from the south. Communication with Eastern Canada was mainly through the States. Telegraph line connected with the American System at the boundary line, but telegrams were a costly luxury. Occasionally, through storms or floods, we would be shut off from the outside world. Progress was being made, but slowly, until the advent of the Canadian Pacific Railway from the East brought things on with a rush. But Winnipeg was not ready for the emergency, though we began to recognize development and make some show of meeting the new conditions.

Some of us who were there when Nanton came in 1883, know that accommodation was not up to our present modern mark. Most young men had to get a room in some house, with breakfast, and their other meals where they could. And good places were not plentiful, as we all know. Those were the days when water was delivered from house to house in carts, when the unpaved streets were impassable in wet weather, and when life generally was very different from the comfortable, settled existence in the older city of Toronto. But Nanton was not cast down by difficult conditions, though he naturally missed the atmosphere of his home. He had decided to throw in his lot with the West, and he so writes: "As I am going to spend a large portion of my life here, I am not going to complain of temporary discomforts."

It did not take him long to discover that on the frontiers there were some who had drifted in for the sole purpose of making money, without any regard for the ethics of business and without any considera-

tion for those whom they might fleece. All this was deeply repugnant to Nanton, and he preferred to lose opportunities of that kind and let others have them if they chose. Writing to Mr. Hammond, he said, "In the long run, it will pay better to do our business on proper business principles, and I would not think of falling into the ways of some men in this country." In another letter, he stated that he was ready to do business of any kind, "as long as it is not an unclean kind of business." That he built on a true foundation is proved by the high reputation he bore throughout the years and by the massive business structure he built upon the rock of sound principles.

I have already noted how from the beginning Nanton practised due caution. He saw other concerns making loans recklessly, as those of us knew who were in law offices at the time. Foreclosures which brought distress to whole families were frequent enough. But Nanton desired to avoid loans of that sort, even though he had to lose business. He took that ground for two main reasons—firstly, because he was handling trust funds, and, secondly, because he seemed to look beyond the individual against whom action might be taken to those who might be dependent on him. A friend of his, who is a very great business figure, said to me, "Nothing seemed to keep Nanton from visualising the distress that might fall on the innocent through some action taken." Accordingly he preferred to avoid the kind of business that might involve foreclosures and consequent hardships.

In the year 1884 in which Mr. Nanton was writing most of these letters, we find him in the Fall, writing to Mr. Hammond that crops were badly frozen in part of the country. This was before Saunders and Seager Wheeler and Strange and Trelle and others

had developed a type of wheat that would ripen many days earlier than the old Red Fife. Nanton speaks of hundreds of acres not worth cutting, and of the low grade and small price for what was cut and marketed. And then he adds: "These men must be carried over till next year." This was a statement which may seem like plain common sense to anyone engaged in the mortgage business to-day, but it struck a new note in those first days of farming in the West.

About this period, Mr. Nanton was active in trying to get the vacant land around Winnipeg settled, instead of leaving it in the hands of speculators who were holding on without trying to develop it, in the hope that values would rise. He also secured large blocks of fertile land in the Qu'Appelle country, and was responsible for a large measure of the settlement which took place there. Indicative of the thoroughness with which Osler, Hammond & Nanton went into the question of land settlement is a pamphlet which it circulated throughout Canada and which, while not produced until 1900, may be mentioned here.

On the first page is a railway map of Manitoba and the North West Territories, which is interesting to-day as showing what a great deal of railway building has gone on since. The other side of the pamphlet has the appearance of a Government production, giving detailed information regarding homestead regulations, how to ship settlers' effects, rates and customs regulations. A description follows of the climate, soil and advantages of Alberta and Saskatchewan as a home for settlers, with paragraphs devoted to the difference to be found in soil, climate, water, etc., in different localities. The possibilities of raising livestock are emphasized—horses, cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry—and finally there are some useful bits of information re-

garding schools, taxes, fuel, quarantine regulations, stop-over privileges and even how to purchase a railway ticket.

I recall that, after the Riel Rebellion campaign in 1885, as a recognition of the claims of the half-breeds and the services of others, the Dominion Government issued scrip which would be accepted at its face value in any purchase of Dominion land. Many of those who received this scrip either did not know its value or were so anxious for ready money that they were willing to sell it for a fraction of its real worth as a purchasing medium. Accordingly, there was a rush of speculators who sent agents out to buy scrip for small amounts. And the speculators, taking the scrip to centres like Winnipeg, would sell it at a large advance to those who could use it in the purchase of land from the Government. Mr. Nanton set his face against this practice which wronged the original owners of the scrip. He is on record in these letters as saying, "I do not want to buy scrip from dealers and scalpers who rob the half-breeds, but I will buy direct from the owners at a good price."

It is proper to record here that in 1886, when Nanton had become sufficiently established to warrant a home of his own, he married Miss Georgina Hope Hespeler, a daughter of the Honourable William Hespeler, then prominent in the public and business life of Winnipeg. It is sad to recall that she died a year afterwards, leaving a daughter, now Mrs. Lorn Cameron, of Vancouver.

And so, as we close his first personal letter book, we have before us the picture of a young business man, in a difficult field, at a difficult time, who was resolved that he would not lower his standard or do anything that was out of keeping with his own sense of honour.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE OFFICE BUSINESS GREW

In the preceding chapter we have been reading extracts from the early letters of Augustus Nanton to the firm or members thereof in Toronto. It is an interesting mental exercise to follow in the train of his efforts and to see how the business developed with the years. Mr. Nanton, of course, had able office assistants, who grew in numbers from five to one hundred and fifty during his life time in Winnipeg. His own attitude towards them was always one of profound appreciation of merit, but they cannot all be mentioned, and, to avoid appearing to be invidious, one has to omit their names unless for some very special reason. Some were with him all through those years and many through much of the period, but I find that they prefer to be considered as assistants and helpers to "The Chief", the power of whose directing mind, they say, was felt throughout all departments. He, himself, was always ready and anxious to give the members of his staff more credit than they were willing to accept. So we leave it at that in the meantime, and the staff will not object.

The North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Company was the basis of the Winnipeg business, along with such brokerage transactions as Nanton desired to handle. This Company had been one of the chief items in the Toronto office, and because the loan business in the East was reaching the limit of investment, the wise plan of operating in a new and uncrowded field in the West was formulated.

It may be interesting to our readers to know that the North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Company was an organization with headquarters in Aberdeen. This statement is sufficient to indicate that the business was being conducted with caution and ability. Pellat and Osler and, later Osler and Hammond in Toronto, were the Canadian agents for this strong organization. It is interesting to note in a statement at the annual general meeting of the Company held in Aberdeen on the 20th of December, 1882, that Mr. J. W. Barclay, M. P., who presided, made characteristically cautious statements in regard to opening up business in Manitoba and the North West. Mr. Barclay said, "This has been urged upon the Board by some of the shareholders, and they have given the matter very careful consideration. If we should extend our business to the North West and keep it as well in hand as we do the business in Ontario, it would be necessary for us to establish a separate organization in Winnipeg and this would necessarily involve very considerable additional expenses. That might be met by the interest obtained in Manitoba, but, looking at the whole matter, whether we be right or wrong, it appeared to us that Manitoba and the North West have yet to be proved, and that it would, in the meantime, be prudent to wait." This statement was received with applause by the shareholders.

In this connection, it is very interesting to notice that, on the 22nd of December preceding, the Board of the Company, writing to their Toronto agents, conveyed a special message of appreciation through them to Mr. A. M. Nanton for the ability and devotion he had manifested in attending to the business of the North of Scotland Company in the Toronto office. This message was accompanied by a tangible expression of

thanks in the form of a New Year's Day gift of \$250.00. Shortly thereafter, the Toronto firm increased Mr. Nanton's salary. I have found a letter from Mr. Nanton, then a young man of twenty-two, to the Secretary of the North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Company in Aberdeen:

Dear Sir:—

The General Managers have handed me your letter of the 22nd ult., advising them of the resolution of the Board granting me \$250.00, and at the same time informing me of the handsome increase just made to my salary by the Board. I have to thank the Directors of the Company for their kind intention and sincerely trust that time may prove that their confidence has not been misplaced.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Respectfully yours,

A. M. NANTON.

At the annual meeting, held in Aberdeen 1883, Mr. Barclay brought up again the advisability of extending the Company's operations in the North West of Canada, but this time he spoke from personal knowledge gained from a visit to Canada during the previous summer. He detailed a trip taken by him with Mr. Osler and Mr. Nanton, travelling over the railway from Toronto to Winnipeg, and from Winnipeg westward. Mr. Barclay reported that he didn't meet a farmer who was dissatisfied with the country and added, "My general conclusion is that wheat can be produced in the North West of Canada at a cheaper rate than anywhere else in North America. After seeing the country for myself and coming in contact with the settlers, I arrived at the conclusion that it is quite as safe to lend money on land in the North West as it was ten years ago in the East."

At the next annual general meeting in Aberdeen, the following statement was made by Mr. Barclay:

In May last, a branch of the Company's business was established in Winnipeg, under the immediate charge of Mr. A. M. Nanton, who has long rendered important service in the conduct of the Company's business in Toronto. The results so far are satisfactory and your Directors have confidence that a safe and profitable business will be steadily developed in the North West provinces of Canada.

These careful and able business men of Aberdeen had evidently come to see that the advice of their Canadian agents was sound. A few years later, at another general meeting of the Company in Aberdeen, we find Mr. William Alexander, member of the Board, saying that he thought the Company had been exceptionally fortunate in their advisory board and agents on the other side of the water. At this point, Mr. A. M. Nanton, who was present for the first time at a meeting of the Board, as their representative in Western Canada, was introduced and received with much appreciation. Mr. Nanton made a characteristically modest address, but one that indicated quite freely his remarkable grasp of conditions in the country and gave a vision of its future greatness. It is interesting to note his saying in connection with the business: "We have not had a sale or suit of any kind or description since we opened the branch in Winnipeg." This, as indicated elsewhere, was doubtless due to Nanton's business ability, as well as his consideration for the welfare of others. It may be mentioned that, in December 1897, Mr. Nanton again visited Aberdeen to be present at the Annual Meeting. On that occasion, Mr. Barclay, the Chairman, said: "We have the pleasure of having with us to-day Mr. A. M. Nanton, who so ably represents us in Winnipeg. He is one of the pioneers who during the past fourteen years has been engaged in laying the foundation of a great country in the North West of which we

shall all be proud, as we are proud of what has been already accomplished. During these fourteen years Mr. Nanton has succeeded in building up for us the largest and best mortgage business in Manitoba."

Nanton himself handled most of this Company's business in the West in the early years, even to the point of examining lands or other property offered as security for loans, as well as some personal study of the applicants, and the fact that £50,000 was loaned through the Winnipeg office in the first year and a half is impressive proof of his capacity for hard work.

I think he would have made his way to the front line of business even in the more crowded East. But the fact that while quite a young man he was thrown very much on his own resources in the West, no doubt, brought earlier development of his powers. I have often thought, for instance, that his business ability and the place he had made for himself in Winnipeg financial circles were singularly attested by the fact that, though many of older standing were in the city, Nanton, while still quite young, was selected by the bondholders in Eastern Canada and the Old Country for appointment, in 1894, as Receiver for the Manitoba North Western Railway, the affairs of which were in a very critical condition. It was a remarkable expression of confidence in so young a man, but it turned out to be fully justified. In this work, he was brought into daily contact with Mr. W. R. Baker, the Superintendent, and with Mr. D. B. Hanna, who was then in charge of the accounting and practically of the operation of this road. Mr. Hanna, a man of great business ability, who was afterwards a Vice-President of the Canadian Northern Railway, and later President of the Canadian National Railway, said to me the other day that Mr. Nanton had made a great success of the

receivership. "He was early at the work in our office every day he was in the city," said Mr. Hanna, "and gave very close and expert attention to every detail of revenue and expenditure." In consequence, the interests of the bondholders were fully protected and finally the Road was purchased by the Canadian Pacific Railway, to be made part of its system.

This particular item as to the receivership is quoted somewhat out of chronological order, but my idea is to show how outstanding a figure Mr. Nanton had become in the business world at home and abroad while he was yet quite a young man.

Now we can go back more especially to see how the office business grew from the beginning, when it was doing little else but manage funds for the North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Company. I recall Nanton's first office in Winnipeg, on Bannatyne Avenue, the one for which he paid fifty dollars a month and then wondered whether the firm at headquarters would think that was extravagant. A fire damaged the building and the office was moved to the Dundee Block on Main Street, near Portage Avenue.

Nanton was on the lookout for ways of turning over an honest dollar in any legitimate way. Here is a particularly interesting case. A year or two after he came to Winnipeg, the buffalo that had roamed the great plains in thousands had practically become extinct, except where here and there private herds, few in number, could be found. The buffalo robe had been always considered quite properly as the best thing of its kind for wear, or rugs, or any kindred purpose. Nanton bought up all the available buffalo robes and undressed buffalo skin in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company and in the eastern part of Canada, held them for a while, and sold at a satisfactory advance.

The people who ultimately got them for the purposes indicated above got more than the worth of their money, but the incident shows Nanton's judgment in a new venture.

Let me now give in some orderly detail facts to show how the business of the firm grew in the Winnipeg office in all directions.

About 1890 Osler, Hammond & Nanton were appointed agents for the Calgary & Edmonton Land Company and also for the Qu'Appelle Long Lake and Steamboat Company, for the sale of their lands. There was also the Calgary & Edmonton Townsite Company and the Qu'Appelle Long Lake Townsite Company, which had lots for sale in the leading towns from Edmonton to Macleod and from Regina to Prince Albert. The business in land and town lots at that time was quite active and entailed an increase in the staff, so that the office moved to the block at the corner of Main and Lombard Streets, where it remained until the Dominion Bank erected their building at the corner of Main Street and McDermott Avenue, and Osler, Hammond & Nanton moved there and occupied the entire ground floor. But even this space gradually became insufficient and in 1908 the present Nanton Building was finished and the office was moved there, where it has remained ever since, a great building in a strategical position on the corner of Main Street and Portage Avenue.

The Winnipeg Western Land Corporation, which had land along the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway near Yorkton and Beaver Hill districts, appointed Osler, Hammond & Nanton their agents in 1890, as did also the Canada Saskatchewan Land Company. The agency for all these land and townsite companies is still retained by the firm.

In 1900, Osler, Hammond & Nanton were appointed agents for the Galt Coal Company of Lethbridge, which agency the office still retains. From this start a Fuel Department developed in all its branches, both wholesale and retail.

When the Stocks and Bond Department was first started, and, in fact, until a few years prior to the war, little business in stocks and bonds was done in Winnipeg, investment and speculation being then largely confined to grain, lands and town and city properties. From the time the business started until about 1909, daily quotations were sent by telegram from Osler & Hammond in Toronto, as well as the rates of exchange, which were supplied to the banks. About 1909 a private wire connection was established with Toronto and New York. This department has grown immensely, and the firm is now a member of the Montreal Stock Exchange and the Montreal Curb Market, as well as being a charter member of the Winnipeg Stock Exchange.

There was a Real Estate Department, for, during the years when Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan were developed, and a large amount of immigration was coming in annually, there was a large turnover of lands. A considerable amount of land was owned by parties in Eastern Canada, United States and Great Britain, and many of these appointed Osler, Hammond & Nanton their agents for the sale of lands, on a commission basis, and a large amount of land was disposed of through this department. This branch of the business, however, was not developed to any extent after 1900. The need for it was not increasing, owing to extensive settlement.

The Mortgage Loans Department was started by the North of Scotland in 1883, but as the demand for

farm loans increased and the facilities for obtaining new business were developed beyond what the North of Scotland could take care of, negotiations were entered into with other companies and in a few years Osler, Hammond & Nanton had the agency for the following additional companies, which loaned money on first mortgages on farm lands:

1900—Law Union & Rock Insurance Company, Limited (Investment Department).
1910 -The Dominion of Canada Investment & Debenture Company, Limited.
1913 - The Northern & Dominions Mortgage Company, Limited.

In addition to the above companies, Osler, Hammond & Nanton represented a very large amount of private capital sent for investment by clients in Great Britain and Eastern Canada and, in order to facilitate the investment of these funds, the Osler & Nanton Trust Company was organized in 1911.

The Insurance Department was founded in May, 1899, when arrangements were made to represent the Law Union & Crown Insurance Company, (now Law Union & Rock Insurance Company), for which company the firm also loaned money on mortgages. From time to time further connections were made, until the following were represented by the office: Alliance Insurance Co. Ltd. of London, England; Imperial Insurance Office; Law Union & Rock Insurance Co. Ltd.; New York Underwriters Insurance Company; Northern Assurance Co. Ltd.; Queen Insurance Co. of America; Western Assurance Company.

The business was confined entirely to fire insurance for a number of years, but gradually all classes of insurance including plate glass, casualty, hail, etc., were covered.

In earlier years, the business was confined chiefly to insurance arising through mortgage loan connections represented by the office. However, as time advanced, a general agency business was developed throughout the three prairie provinces, and, in more recent years, the insurance activities have spread throughout the Dominion, both east and west, and branch offices have recently been opened in Vancouver and Calgary.

I would like to interject here a case which was typical of Mr. Nanton's straightforward methods in dealing with business transactions. The case suggests the fact that his reputation for gentleness and integrity caused even outsiders to take his word without question for "his word was as good as his bond".

In 1902, Americans from Minneapolis, represented by Mr. George Piper, became interested in Western Canadian lands and desired to purchase the balance of the lands of the Qu'Appelle Long Lake & Saskatchewan Railway and Steamboat Company, for which Osler, Hammond & Nanton were agents. These lands amounted to about 800,000 acres.

Mr. Nanton went to Minneapolis and talked over the matter and, without any formal agreement being entered into, arranged to dispose of the lands on certain terms to Mr. Piper or his nominees; and on the strength of Mr. Nanton's word only, Mr. Piper organized a company, acquired the necessary capital (which was several million dollars, and had to be in cash) and the transaction was completed.

Mr. George Piper, who was one of the most wealthy and respected business men in Minneapolis, frequently told the story in Minneapolis, Winnipeg and elsewhere, to illustrate the great confidence which they had in Mr. Nanton, as Mr. Piper used to remark that he had never

heard of a transaction of that magnitude being arranged and closed without an agreement, and only a gentleman's word. It is also evident that Mr. Nanton must have had the highest regard for Mr. Piper.

It is anticipating in time, but I add here two notable indications of the remarkable way in which Mr. Nanton became known both at home and abroad as a particularly able and impartial business man. In 1912, Mr. Nanton was asked by Morgan Grenfell & Co., the London house of J. P. Morgan Company, to assist them unofficially in reaching an agreement with one of the Western Provinces regarding a seven million dollar bond issue which they had purchased and about which a dispute had arisen. After several months, a satisfactory agreement was reached and the famous London house wrote to Mr. Nanton, thanking him for his services, "which have been invaluable in bringing matters to the present state."

The Canada Colonization Company was a non profit-sharing organization formed in 1919 for the purpose of settling some thirty million acres of land which were lying vacant close to the railway lines. This association had the support of the Government for a time, but for various reasons, dissatisfaction arose and, in 1923, it was decided to reorganize it, so that it would perform a general supervisory service, free of charge, in the way of listing all land available for sale, assisting intending settlers to obtain suitable farms, and helping them for a period after they had commenced to operate. The association was to be supported by the Federal Government and by the two railways, three men from each being chosen as directors. There was some anxiety lest the various interests concerned might fail to work together amicably, and strong pressure was brought to bear on Sir Augustus Nanton to be-

come Chairman of the Board. It was a time when his hands were full with other important matters, and when the state of his health was commencing to trouble him, but so insistent were the three groups that he should head the association that he finally consented to act. Being himself a prominent director of one of the railroads, this was a singular tribute to Nanton's reputation for impartiality and square dealing.

The above is an outline which, on the face of it, indicates the amazing advance of the office business from the days of the two rooms on Bannatyne Street to the present splendid building. This outline, of course, does not include Nanton's large interests in concerns outside his office. But any outline of office business that can be given leaves much to the imagination, when one thinks of the changes of all kinds over the space of the years. The growth of the office staff from five to one hundred and fifty causes us to vision the human element of many people of many types of mind and varying capacities, all under the general oversight of a directing mind. The forty years in time along which this office business grew to such dimensions saw many changes in the country. There were days of depression and days of inflation, days of hardship in the land and days when the country blossomed with great harvests. There were days when the single-hearted and genuine people pursued their honest way, and days when wild-eyed, unreasoning men would pull down the structure of human society, regardless of the suffering of the innocent. Through all these Nanton passed unafraid, keeping his human sympathies alive and his hand ever ready to dispense help to the needy. A business man of tremendous ability and indefatigable industry, he never became a machine, because the heart of him throbbed responsive to the sorrows and the pains of his fellow men.

CHAPTER V

THE WAR PERIOD

Some years ago I was riding on horseback across a burnt prairie at night. With darkness around on the earth and darkness in the heavily clouded sky and the wind changeable, I could not be quite sure of my direction. But a sudden flash of lightning lit up the plain and showed the trail and the scattered homesteads of settlers ahead. This I recall for illustration regarding world events. Whatever discussions and opinions and conjectures there were in Europe, I think it is truth to say that the Great War came upon Canada like a flash in the night. And it revealed by its sudden glow the lives of people as they actually were in character. People classified themselves into the unselfish or the selfish. They expressed their disposition by exhibiting greatness or meanness, by cheerfully forgetting themselves in the service of the country, its defenders and their families, or by looking for opportunities to enrich themselves through the deadly crime of profiteering. The selfish, thank God, though visible, were in a hopeless minority. They became much fewer as the struggle went onwards, and as they witnessed the passionate devotion of the men who flung themselves into the hazard of battle against the mightiest war machinery the world has ever seen. Not only were the selfish shamed by the valorous sacrifice of men, but by the equally splendid devotion of women who went out to nurse the wounded, comfort the dying, and minister to those who were broken by

the terrific strain of the protracted struggle. Nor was this unselfish devotion manifest only on the fields of active service abroad. Men who could not qualify for service overseas became eager supporters of the cause of the soldiers, and their dependents at home, while women all over Canada turned their houses into workshops and depots for the making and gathering and sending of everything that could bring comfort and strength to the men who were in the trenches or hospitals or casualty stations, or elsewhere in the desperate struggle for the freedom of the world.

In my law student days in Winnipeg, thirty years before the Great War, I had worn the Queen's uniform on active service. Strangely enough, I was in Winnipeg on the way westward on Church service when the declaration of war came with terrific unexpectedness in August, 1914. But the years had brought changes, and I was no longer eligible for that kind of war duty. Hence, having to remain in Canada, I had special opportunity for studying the situation in all parts of the country, taking interest as an old soldier in the news from the Front, and taking note of the men and women and organizations at home in Canada. And I feel entirely free to say that no man within my knowledge in this country did such amazingly devoted service, publicly and privately, as A. M. Nanton of Winnipeg. And I say that for the following reasons, amongst others: Nanton had been thirty years in Winnipeg when the War storm broke over the land. During all that time he had taken a growingly influential but unobtrusive part in the life of both church and state. He had done much to mould the business progress of the city, and was an integral, inspirational part of its leading enterprises. But he had all along declined pressing invitations to enter what is commonly called

public life. He was by nature diffident, and had a strong dislike for anything which savoured of desire to get into the limelight. He felt that others who had cultivated a taste for public life could carry on the general administrative work of the community, and that he could do his best service by building up the industries and the business enterprises of the country. To his intimate friends who, knowing his great ability, used to urge him to enter public life, he said that he would be handicapped by his deafness and by his inexperience in expressing himself in public gatherings, as he had never cultivated the habit. So he went on his way in the business world, actively establishing and carrying on many enterprises which were making the country prosperous and, at the same time, contributing of his substance to all good causes to an extent far beyond what was known. He was content to leave public life to others.

But when the Great War smote the world, and every country in the Empire had to carry its load, A. M. Nanton sprang fully equipped by his talents and experience into the great movements in support of those who were called to fight for the liberties of men. The necessity of maintaining business in the country, and especially the duty of conserving the immense interests he held in trust for others, as well as a call from Vice-Royalty to give his services in support of the soldiers and their dependents, gave him work of enormous value. The burden he assumed was tremendous when taken along with his other responsibilities as above noted. He entered upon war work with a consuming zeal and intensity which took heavy toll of his time and strength. The Great War battered down many besides those who fell in action on the field.

Mr. Nanton had no illusion about the meaning of the war, or the burdens it would impose on those who tried at home or abroad to stem the tide which flowed so strongly against the British Empire. He knew it was a life-and-death struggle, and he was more than willing to pay the price for the preservation of the world's freedom.

During that war period there were men who saw in the conflict a great opportunity to increase their possessions, by making money out of the situation. Nanton had the opportunity to do the same, but his whole nature would scorn to make money out of the days of woe and sorrow. With him, it was a time for giving, and not for getting. And so he gave his strength and time and means to such an extent that, when the war ended, his health was undermined and his possessions cut down to half what they had been before the war began. It is well known that Nanton gave all his war work without remuneration.

Referring to his entering on the work, I have before me as I write a wire dated August 14th, 1914, to Mr. Nanton from the Governor-General of Canada, the Duke of Connaught, who was organizing a Patriotic Fund for the support of the dependents of soldiers who had gone to the Front. Of this Fund, His Majesty, the King, was Patron. The wire reads:

A. M. Nanton, Esq., Winnipeg:

I propose to start a Canadian Patriotic Fund. Hope you will join as an officer. Please reply. Arthur.

Mr. Nanton, who was already stirring up his own community in this direction, joined the Fund and became the only western member of the Dominion Executive. But his main concern was the local Winnipeg Patriotic Fund which was the first organization

of the kind formed in Canada after the war began. This Winnipeg Fund was later widened to the Manitoba Patriotic Fund and Nanton was the President. He had the special assistance of a small and highly competent Board, consisting of himself, Charles F. Roland, D. M. Solandt, W. J. Bulman, H. A. Robson, K.C., F. E. Gantier, John Galt, and Charles H. Webster. There were, of course, many committees from amongst the large membership, but though they were all able and deeply interested and constantly at work, one of the Executive no doubt voiced the general opinion when he said, "Mr. Nanton was, in every way, head and shoulders above us all." The Manitoba Patriotic Fund reported to the Canadian body, but gathered and administered its own funds, which were the largest per capita in the Dominion.

From the first meeting of citizens held in Winnipeg, after the war began, Mr. Nanton's leadership as the foremost business man in Winnipeg was recognized by reason of his executive ability. But on account of his previous aloofness from public life for reasons already mentioned, it is doubtful whether the other great qualities of the man became fully known until this tremendous emergency brought them out in strong relief. He presided at all meetings of the Patriotic Fund when in the city and exercised such firm diplomacy that harmony and enthusiasm resulted. He had not cultivated the art of public speech but his earnest directness, clarity of thought and excellent language secured the deepest attention. In the office administration of the Fund he was the regulating force. The Hon. T. C. Norris, Premier of Manitoba, said publicly that never had a public movement handled so much money with such accuracy and faithfulness of application. This was due to Nanton's extraordinary

capacity for detail, his close co-operation with excellent office men like Roland and Solandt, as well as his insistence on continuous audits and statements. His associates were all delighted with this because it made the office immune from successful criticism or attack.

These business qualities in Nanton were in a sense generally recognized before. But the qualities of sympathy and helpfulness which were known to his boyhood friends and any who were his beneficiaries all along, came out into the open in the war period because so many more came to know of them in a public way. One of the ablest men on the Executive of the Patriotic Fund wrote me regarding Mr. Nanton, saying, "He was most extraordinarily sympathetic. He felt that every man, woman and child was on an equal plane, so far as the War was concerned. He made no distinction." Speaking of his work, the same writer goes on to say, "He had always disliked putting his name on subscriptions which were to be published, as he preferred the quieter way. But the absence of his name from the Patriotic Fund lists might be misunderstood and so his name appeared with what seems to me enormous sums each month. The men who knew said he was giving much more privately."

Out of the general popular understanding that Mr. Nanton was the embodiment of the organization that looked after cases of need, some peculiar incidents took place and became known, not from him, but from those who benefitted. For instance, there was serious illness in the family of an absent soldier one winter's night and the mother telephoned to Mr. Nanton's home after midnight, crying, "Get a doctor, quick." Nanton got up and telephoned a doctor, who said, "I will go of course, but I cannot get a car out." Mr. Nanton replied, "I will go for you myself," and,

dressing hurriedly, and without waking his chauffeur, took his own car, found the doctor, and was out most of the night. Next morning Nanton turned up at the office of the Patriotic Fund at the usual hour, bright as ever, but said nothing about it. The mother, however, told her friends about this business and railway magnate who drove his own car and brought the doctor through a midnight storm to save the life of her child. One who knows instances of the same general type marvels at the crass ignorance and bitterness of men who denounce all who have any property as the enemies of society. They know not what they say and they refuse to look at concrete evidence.

When the War had run many months with no likelihood of ending early, Mr. Nanton was one of the men who saw that the voluntary contribution basis with the giving largely from people easy to get at throughout Manitoba was not enough, however willing these contributors were. Hence some plan had to be formed, under which, while voluntary contributions might continue and did continue in his own case and many others, the population generally might be helping to carry the load. The only way to accomplish this was by taxation, and Nanton, with the support of some councillors, undertook to put this matter before the Union of Municipalities. He had a delicate task, but succeeded in persuading the Municipal Union of the wisdom and the practicability of a small tax levy authorized by legislation. This worked well as an equitable plan in which all had a share. Each year, Mr. Nanton went back to this gathering to give an estimate of what would be required and to give a very detailed account of what had been done with the amount received before. This latter naturally involved statements as to the class of work which had been carried on during

the year and necessarily included accounts of work which tugged at the heart-strings of both the speaker and his hearers. Here again men who assembled from all sections of the country learned that this business leader had a profoundly human and compassionate soul.

It may be well also in these days of wild indiscriminate and unthinking attacks on people who have considerable means to say that Mr. Nanton, from the first, made it very plain that when conscription of men came for service abroad or work at home, money should be laid under conscription also. And he not only lived up to his opinions personally, but took special steps to see that all the concerns in which he was interested should make contribution. In this way he had very large sums flowing monthly into the Patriotic Fund in a steady stream.

Mr. Nanton travelled all over the country, addressing organizations and public meetings with great force and power. It was wearing work physically and otherwise for a man who was in the white heat of earnestness, and all this extra burden came upon him when, owing to the absence at the war of one-half his office staff and two of his partners, Lt.-Col. Hugh Osler, now president of the Company, and Major George Lynch, who was killed in action, greatly regretted, the demands of the business upon him were almost overwhelming. Those around knew that and often asked him to slow down or to give up some of the important directorates he held. He vowed always that many were dependent on the proper administration of business concerns and that he could not refrain from doing his share in war or peace, as long as he was able. He used to declare publicly that "those who have to stay at home must not forget their duty. The soldier who

goes to the front offers all he has and we who are at home must not shirk our full duty. After the war is over there will be two kinds of men in Canada: those who did their bit and those who did not. There can be no neutrals." To his mind there was everything at stake and there could be no sparing of one's self until victory was established. So, with equal enthusiasm and intensity he threw himself into the raising of the Victory Loan Fund which rose to an almost incredible sum in proportion to the population of Manitoba.

That the people of Canada gave in a magnificent way to all compassionate organizations connected with the war is shown by the almost incredible sum total of their liberality towards benevolent causes. Their response was no less remarkable in supplying the Government with the immense sums needed to raise the Canadian Expeditionary Force and to maintain it on the field. By March, 1917, the Dominion Government had raised \$550,000,000 by a series of War Loans. These were subscribed for largely by insurance companies and other institutions through the agency of banks and bond houses, but as the Government war expenses approached a figure of \$1,000,000 per day it was realized that the resources of the whole people of Canada would have to be drawn upon if sufficiently large sums were to be raised.

To discuss this vital matter, Sir Thomas White, the Minister of Finance, called a meeting at Montreal on September 25th, 1917, of leading financial men. From Western Canada there were present the Provincial Treasurers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and Sir Augustus Nanton, who had been recently knighted. At that meeting it was decided that a country-wide canvass should be made in No-

ember for what would be called "Canada's Victory Loan 1917". A Dominion Executive was appointed and arrangements were set on foot for organizing provincial committees in eastern Canada. Sir Augustus was the only westerner named to this executive and the task of organizing committees in the Prairie provinces was placed in his hands.

Within three days of his return from Montreal, Sir Augustus, with the Hon. Edward Brown, Provincial Treasurer, had brought together the men who were to form the Manitoba Executive Committee. These men performed such splendid services during this and the subsequent campaigns that their names may be fittingly recorded here: Chairman, Sir Augustus Nanton; Vice-Chairman, A. L. Crossin; Secretary, J. A. Anderson; Treasurer, Harry Ford; Members: W. R. Allan, T. R. Billett, J. A. Botterell, G. M. Black, John Black, Hon. Edward Brown, W. J. Christie, S. P. Clark, W. H. Gardner, E. E. Hall, W. T. Kirby, Peter Lowe, Robert McKay, N. T. McMillan, W. J. O'Neill, R. T. Riley, A. N. Strang, J. A. Thomson. Sub-committees were also formed for Brandon and the other provincial centres, as well as for the rural districts and while it is impossible to mention all the names, these men did most useful work and displayed a splendid spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice, which deserves recognition.

Having thus started the work going, Sir Augustus went to Regina with the Hon. Edward Brown, to confer with the Hon. C. A. Dunning, Provincial Treasurer of Saskatchewan, and within ten days of the organization meeting in Montreal he wrote to Sir Thomas White, "I have already organized a provincial committee in Manitoba and have also made preliminary arrangements for Saskatchewan. I shall go to Edmon-

ton and Calgary as soon as the Provincial Treasurer of Alberta returns from the east We shall be extremely disappointed if the West does not take its full share of the loan."

The task of building up organizations which would reach not only the urban populations but the farmers scattered over the immense area of the prairies presented many difficult problems, with which the eastern members of the Dominion Executive could not be familiar. It followed, therefore, that Sir Augustus was given a wide latitude in deciding upon the methods to be followed in the western campaign, and in the minds of all the various committees which were formed on the prairies he was the link between them and the headquarters in Toronto. It was the first time that the people of the West had had the virtues of a government bond brought directly to their attention as a medium of investment; indeed, this and the later Victory Loan campaigns are of definite importance in the financial development of the West, in that the people became lenders for the first time in their history. Prior to this, the western farmer had placed his surplus funds in local farm mortgages or real estate, while the municipalities and other civic bodies had sold their bonds and debentures in the eastern money markets. The rest of Canada was amazed and gratified, therefore, when Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in the three Victory Loan campaigns of 1917, 1918 and 1919 subscribed for bonds totalling over \$246,000,000.

It was, too, the first time that what really amounted to a personal canvass of every individual westerner had ever been attempted. Naturally, the many newly-formed committees and groups of canvassers could not be expected to function smoothly all the time, and

those who took part in the direction of this work remember most vividly the great mental strain and physical weariness which they experienced, increasing as the opening day of the campaign approached, and made bearable only by the stimulus of a common patriotic zeal and the fervour of their indefatigable Chairman.

Sir Augustus' enthusiasm was indeed contagious and I will quote a few incidents taken from his files. Quite early in the campaign a farmer in Saskatchewan wrote in to the Mortgage Department of Osler, Hammond & Nanton, as follows:—"I wrote you a few days ago that I would pay off my mortgage, but as this Victory Loan has sprung up since, I will ask for a renewal of it, either all or half of it, as I would like to invest in the Victory Loan, if possible." The letter was evidently handed to Sir Augustus, for he personally wrote the following reply: "I have just noticed your letter to my firm, in which you say that you now wish to renew your mortgage instead of paying it off, as you intend investing the money in Canada's Victory Loan bonds. My office will be pleased to renew the loan for you, and I am asking them in your case to do it at a reduced rate of interest, and they will shortly write you to that effect. Will you allow me to congratulate you on your decision and to say that your example in giving assistance to our country in her time of need and thereby furnishing help to those now defending us at the front is one which might well be followed by all true Britishers." This case is of genuine credit to both men concerned, and was discovered only now in the firm's records.

While the campaign was at its height, Sir Augustus sent the following telegram to the Chairman of the local committee in the town of Nanton, Alberta—a

town named after him but formerly called Mosquito Creek. "Have just heard your district is first in South Alberta to exceed its objective. I heartily congratulate you, and to indicate that there is a little more in the name of Nanton than Mosquito Creek I desire to subscribe through you for three one thousand dollar bonds." At the close of the campaign, one of the members of the Manitoba Committee, who was in charge of the rural districts, wrote to congratulate Sir Augustus on the successful results and added: "It will be gratifying for you to hear that upon each occasion that I had the opportunity of introducing to you a friend from the country he afterwards doubled his subscription." These words describe eloquently the influence of a magnetic human alive with enthusiasm for a great cause.

The campaign was opened at Winnipeg with a great parade which Sir Augustus described to Mr. A. E. Ames, the Dominion Chairman, in a telegram: "Parade this morning was greatest in Winnipeg's history, about three miles long and viewed, it is estimated, by hundred thousand people. First application filed with us this morning was from Hudson's Bay Company for one million dollars. All are working together and we sincerely hope for complete success." A success beyond all expectations was indeed achieved and two weeks later, on the last night of the campaign when returns were pouring in, Sir Augustus sent this inspiring message to the Dominion Headquarters:— "Manitoba Committee heartily congratulate Dominion Executive on wonderful achievement. In September, 1914, Manitoba made it clear that it was in the war to full extent of its resources. It has already supplied its full quota of men and is now backing them up with its money. Manitoba's allotment was \$10,000,000,

its objective \$15,000,000. This we raised to \$22,000,000 and we now propose supplying about \$30,000,000. If more is wanted a little later for freedom's cause Manitoba can be counted on to carry on."

Actually, Manitoba's subscriptions totalled \$32,300,000, a sum equal to \$71 per head of population in the province, a figure which was exceeded only by Ontario and which compared with a per capita subscription for the whole Dominion of \$58. Taking into consideration the great difficulties which had to be faced in the way of general public ignorance among the majority of people regarding bonds as a medium of investment, and remembering the great distances which had to be covered by the canvassers, it seems to me that the Vice-Chairman of the Dominion Executive was correct when he telegraphed to Sir Augustus, "Heartiest congratulations. Manitoba stands out pre-eminently in this campaign."

In November, 1918, the second Victory Loan was launched and the Manitoba organization, with Sir Augustus as Chairman, went into the campaign once again, with practically no change of personnel. The experiences gained from the previous campaign were of great value, and practically all basic questions of organization and procedure were settled well in advance of the actual campaign. While less than 1,000 canvassers had covered the province in 1917, nearly 2,500 this time were now organized and in action. For a time a great obstacle was encountered in a violent epidemic of influenza which was so severe on the prairies that in many towns the health authorities had to forbid the holding of public meetings of any kind. This serious development did not daunt the spirit of the canvassers, however, and Sir Augustus wrote to head-

quarters that "in Winnipeg we are going right ahead despite all obstacles."

This Dominion-wide effort was probably the most remarkable financial campaign which has yet been held in Canada. The Armistice had just been signed and the people were filled with a fresh spirit of buoyancy and a desire to grapple with the immense problems of reconstruction which lay ahead of them. With an objective of \$500,000,000 the people of Canada subscribed for the tremendous sum of \$676,000,000, and Manitoba, with an objective of \$30,000,000, passed it in brilliant fashion and turned in \$33,600,000. This astonishing result brought many messages of congratulation to Sir Augustus and his committee, but I will quote only from one, written to him by Mr. E. R. Wood, of Toronto, Chairman of the Dominion Executive:—

"Dear Sir Augustus:

Manitoba's effort in the Victory Loan is simply magnificent. I really think, all things considered, it has been the finest thing of the whole campaign. The result is, of course, due to the splendid organization which you were able to get together, and to the initiative, courage and optimism which you threw into the whole task."

Then, after referring to the extraordinary success of the Fund in the Prairie provinces and the benefits that would come therefrom, Mr. Wood goes on to say, "These are, of course, incalculable from the economic, financial, political and moral standpoints, and the West, under your splendid leadership, is entitled to the warmest congratulations and heartiest thanks from all the rest of Canada."

Canada's third and final Victory Loan campaign took place in October, 1919, and once again Sir

Augustus led the Manitoba Committee, with most happy results. While the total raised by the province fell below the 1918 record by a million dollars, the canvassers had to face a more difficult task in that the high tension of the war years had naturally enough been followed by a certain rebound with the removal of the immediate crisis, and in addition Manitoba suffered during the canvassing period with a series of blizzards which rendered many of the country roads completely impassable.

Through these three strenuous nerve-wrecking campaigns many instances in the records before me show the wonderful patience and good humour which Sir Augustus displayed. The practical value of humour as a relief to men who have been under great strain is so well proven by human experience that we hail it as a positive blessing. So I am glad to find as a natural incident the telegram which Sir Augustus received from Mr. W. H. Malkin, of Vancouver, Chairman of the British Columbia Committee, together with his reply. These two had been very intense and as a mutual help had kept up a spirit of friendly rivalry and pleasureantry throughout the 1919 campaign. At its close, Mr. Malkin wired: "Please send me express two honour hats for my rack. Manitoba had done well but what is the matter with B.C. Heartfelt congratulations on splendid result achieved." To which Sir Augustus replied, "Manitoba thanks you for kind message and sends you its sincere congratulations. Would gladly send you a dozen hats but all large sized ones are required here." This interchange was a relief to both men.

Sir Augustus' Victory Loan files are filled with instances which I would like to describe in detail of many small subscribers writing to him for advice and in-

formation. The manner in which he attended to each individual one is a revelation. I will mention one example of a farmer in a Manitoba village writing during the 1919 campaign to say that his wife had bought a \$500 bond during the 1918 campaign which had been sent down to Ottawa for registration and which had never been returned. In clearing up this matter, Sir Augustus wrote in all seven letters and a telegram to the Comptroller of Currency at Ottawa, the Deputy Minister of Finance and the General Manager of the bank through which the bond had been purchased, and within ten days the bond had been located and sent on to its proper owner.

Finally, as a fitting close to these three periods of intense patriotic effort, I will mention the presentation to Sir Augustus by the members of the Manitoba Committee of a magnificent silver tray. The whole of the surface is covered with reproductions of the signatures of the above-named men, while on the back the following message is engraved:

VICTORY LOAN 1918

Winnipeg, February 3, 1919.

Sir Augustus M. Nanton,
Winnipeg.

Dear Sir Augustus:—

The principal reason for this gathering of the Executive of the Manitoba General Committee Victory Loan 1918 this evening is to endeavour to show to you our appreciation of your leadership in the campaigns of 1917 and 1918.

We, who know best the extent and value of your labours, wish to express to you our pride in and recognition of your services. To your marked ability as Chairman is due in no small measure the notable success of the campaigns.

We wish also to record our appreciation of the tact, patience and good humour you have exercised. Your untiring energy and ready acceptance of every task, great or small, laid upon

you by the Committee was an inspiration to us all to greater zeal and effort.

We know the burdens on your time made by the unceasing demands of the campaign. Your cheerful undertaking of these demands entailing sacrifice, both personal and monetary, has been to us an excellent example of pure patriotism.

We ask you to accept as a tribute of our affection, esteem and appreciation, this gift of a small piece of plate, with our sincerest wishes for your good health and happiness.

On behalf of the Executive Committee,

J. A. ANDERSON,

Secretary.

This chapter would not be complete without special reference to Nanton's views and efforts in regard to the vital need for the united political action of the Canadian people in the stupendous task of winning the war. To his mind, it was clear that to lose the war was to lose the priceless heritage of civil and religious liberty which was the birthright of our people. Nanton had never taken active part in the ordinary political strife, though he quite agreed that in ordinary times political parties were necessary for responsible government in a free country. But the time of war was not ordinary and to him it was monstrous to fight amongst ourselves when the enemy was at the gate. His views on the subject became widely known throughout Canada. They attracted attention not only on account of the leading position which he occupied in the West, but also by reason of the fact that he had never before expressed his opinion publicly on political matters. Everybody knew that Nanton had no political axe to grind and this new note in public life attracted strong attention.

All this may have had something to do with the fact that the first public meeting to be addressed in Canada by political leaders who were members of the newly formed Union Government was held in Winnipeg with

Nanton in the chair. He said that he had never presided at a political meeting in his life, but this was not in the ordinary sense a political meeting. With a voice vibrant with deep feeling Nanton said that the Provinces had been formed into a Dominion because men like John A. MacDonald and George Brown sank their personal differences for the time, in order to accomplish confederation. Much more, said Nanton, was it necessary for people to be united now when that Dominion and the whole Empire, their honour and their freedom, were in danger. Let us assist one another and stop our party criticism of public men who had immense responsibilities to carry. This famous meeting of five thousand people was addressed by Hon. Arthur Meighen, Conservative; J. A. Calder, Liberal, and the Hon. T. A. Crerar, Progressive. There was tremendous enthusiasm and not a single interruption. It must have brought singular joy to the heart of Sir Augustus Nanton, who had wrought so earnestly for the idea which this meeting so strongly endorsed.

One whose work cannot be unnoticed by anyone who professes to write true history in recording events is Nanton's devoted wife. For Nanton, in 1894, had married Miss Ethel Constance Clark, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Clark, well-known, highly-esteemed citizens of Winnipeg. While active in social duties, her home was her first concern. She entered sympathetically into every phase of her husband's wide activities. Their children were two daughters, Constance and Marguerite, and three boys, Edward, Paul and Augustus. Their first child, a son, died in infancy.

In deference to her wishes to remain in the background, I can only mention that the Nanton home was in war time turned into a veritable workshop where,

under her direction, women from all over the city and from every class came to assemble, make, pack and ship tons of comforts of all kinds for the men at the front, as well as to provide for needy cases at home. Further brief reference must be made to this in a later chapter, but it is mentioned here to show that though Mr. and Mrs. Nanton were forgetting themselves in their work, others were thinking of them even to the heart of the Empire itself.

Hence, when in the list of the King's Birthday Honours, on June 3rd, 1917, Mr. Nanton was given a Knighthood, there was tremendous rejoicing amongst all who knew them. Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton were literally deluged with congratulations and felicitations by cables, wires, letters from all classes of people, as well as by personal expressions of satisfaction from those who were within reach. A singular note of real gladness runs through all these messages, every one saying the honour, though unsought, was richly deserved, and every one rejoicing that Nanton had not received this honour for any other reason than high character and noble devotion to the welfare of the country.

At the close of this chapter on the war period, let me add this note, written by one who was in the Winnipeg firm from the beginning:

As a typical example of Mr. Nanton's kindly feeling and thoughtfulness towards his staff and as a tangible expression to them of his deep appreciation of the announcement of peace on the 11th of November, 1918, the following will be of interest. He assembled his office staff, numbering over one hundred, and after a short address to them expressing thankfulness for the ending of the war, he personally handed to each member of the staff a fifty dollar Victory Bond, with a short note signed by himself, bearing these words, "A slight memento of Peace and Victory".

But, though peace had come, Sir Augustus, as I gathered from my last conversation with him, felt intensely that Canada, having passed through a zone of terrible suffering, must prove worthy of the freedom that had been won at such incalculable sacrifice. To him it seemed that only by striving steadily towards a noble destiny and a great influence for good amongst the nations could Canada show that she was not forgetting how her life and honour had been maintained in a crisis hour of history.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONAL NOTES

The old saying that "a man is never a hero to his own valet" has always seemed to me a senseless sort of a proverb. I have known many men who, for various reasons in the nature of aloofness, were not valued at a true estimate by the unthinking public, but who possessed the warmest friendship and the most entire devotion of those who were most closely associated with them.

When in Winnipeg recently, I sought conversation not only with well-known men who had been associated with Mr. Nanton, but I was particularly interested also in seeing men like his old gardener and chauffeur, formerly his coachman. If anyone was seeking to prove the truth of the saying quoted above, he could not find evidence for it in Beavis, who was Sir Augustus' gardener for thirty-two years, nor in Wright, who had been his coachman and chauffeur for twenty years. I did not ask these good, honest men, whom I saw each at his own work, any leading questions, but they both spoke freely and gave their opinion. And their opinion was given in such a simple-hearted, straightforward way that it was manifestly very sincere. They were quite free in saying, each in his own way, that amongst men there had never been such a man as Sir Augustus, and there never would be, and they were glad to think that they had been of some service to him and to his household, to all of whom they were deeply attached. Some years had passed

since his death, but the thought of him was an inspiration to them still.

It seems that it was by reason of one of Mr. Nanton's characteristic acts of kindness that Beavis first came into his employ. Beavis related it thus: "It is a good many years ago now, just after I came here from England. I was trudging out the Portage Road, (now Portage Avenue), looking for work. It was warm and dusty. Behind me came a gentleman driving a nice horse and buggy. I stepped aside to let them pass, but the gentleman pulled up and said pleasantly, 'You are going my way, jump in.' He asked me what I was doing, and I said I was trying to get work. He answered that he was going out to inspect a farm and that he could get me work there, which I took gladly. But I did not know who the gentleman was till we got to the farm and some one there called him Mr. Nanton."

Later on, Beavis laid out the park on River Avenue, near the Nanton home, and after he was through that work Mr. Nanton took him on as gardener. That was at the eastern end of Roslyn Road, and when Mr. Nanton acquired the present beautiful place, 'Kilmorie', Beavis moved there and helped to make the new home a delight to all who knew it. He said Sir Augustus knew every tree as if it was a personal thing, and never liked to have one removed if it could be avoided.

I asked Beavis if he knew Joyce Kilmer's beautiful poem, which I repeated to him, as follows:--

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree,

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain,
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Beavis said that he had heard it, and added that Sir Augustus thought about the trees just in that way.

Beavis told me how Sir Augustus in war time had a great space of the fine lawn turned into a vegetable garden, that it might produce something for the support of others. It was back in lawn again, as if nature would fain heal over the traces of a great conflict.

Wright, the chauffeur, formerly the coachman for Sir Augustus, felt the loss of his master equally keenly. He said that twenty years before, Sir Augustus in London had found him, through a friend, and had brought him to be his coachman in Winnipeg. Nanton was very fond of horses and kept the best that could be secured, as many ribbons and other trophies from exhibitions attest. For years, it was his practice to ride every morning at seven o'clock, and this exercise and the morning air, no doubt, accounted much for his sound health and energy. By and by, horses were to be superseded by motor cars, but Mr. Nanton kept his own horses on a farm near the City, even though they were not in use.

During what was manifestly a revolutionary movement under the name of a strike in Winnipeg in 1919, Nanton's stable at the farm, with all his beautiful horses, was burned to the ground one night. The matter was not followed up and the actual perpetrators of this evident incendiaryism were never discovered, but, in view of the fact that Sir Augustus Nanton had

been a subject of many bitter attacks at the hands of the strikers, many of whom he had befriended, there was general belief that there was connection between this holocaust and the lawless element in the community at the time.

One cannot help thinking again, in this connection, of that unhappy and revolutionary strike in Winnipeg. And one cannot help but feel that the outrageous attitude of some labour and even of some returned men towards Sir Augustus, then president of the Street Railway Company, hurt him greatly. It is quite well known that he accepted the presidency of the Street Railway Company in order to do what he could to keep it running. Its affairs were in serious shape. Sir Augustus did not have to assume the burden. He took it to keep an industry alive and so to help the hundreds who were in its employ. The men themselves on the railway had no grievance. They had steady employment, mainly through the efforts of one who was a consummate business expert. But they listened to the wild appeals of atheistic communists, who had nothing at stake, and they went out on a sympathetic strike, which sane labour men consider the most unjustifiable kind of strike, under almost any conditions.

As for some of the returned soldiers who joined in lawlessness with these weird strikers, one can only surmise that they were shell shocked and unbalanced, or else they, who had gone abroad to uphold justice, would not have forgotten to be just when they returned. No man in Canada had done more for the men at the front and their dependents than Sir Augustus Nanton who, with Lady Nanton, had been incessantly at work for them, and there must have been a heartbreak experienced by these benefactors, unless they felt, as

suggested above, that these men were not quite responsible at that stage. Nanton was exceedingly sensitive to anything that looked like disloyalty, and he said to a friend one day: "You don't know how it hurts!" One can understand all that in a man who had an intense spirit of honour and loyalty himself.

In regard to Nanton's interest in men at the front and their people at home, I had a letter the other day from an old friend who said that his case, he knew, was one of a great many of the same kind. This friend writes that his son was grievously wounded in 1915 and was taken to a hospital in England more dead than alive. Nanton kept close track of all casualties, and my friend says that when he and his wife were distracted and anxious to hear of their son's condition, they got telephone messages every morning letting them know of the lad's progress. The messages came from the Canadian Pacific Telegraph office. The boy recovered, and later my friend and his wife found out that Nanton had made arrangements with the Canadian Pacific in London to enquire every day and to cable to Canada the message which the anxious parents got by telephone. My friend adds: "When my wife and I went to thank Sir Augustus for this great kindness, he seemed quite embarrassed, and said it was little that he could do, compared with the service that the boys were rendering." Here was a man who let not his right hand know what his left hand was doing. He followed his own impulses and was "embarrassed" when anyone found out some good deed and came to thank him for it.

The sympathetic and practical interest taken by Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton in ex-service men was further attested in a splendid way by their devoting their fine summer home at the Lake of the Woods for

two years to wounded and disabled soldiers. These soldiers were taken by relays of twenty-five men every two weeks from the Tuxedo Hospital in Winnipeg to enjoy the glorious weather and the recreations on land and lake which helped so much to restore them to health. Sir Augustus, in addition to the house generally used, built special quarters for the men, where fifty were comfortably located. A doctor was near by, and a nursing sister and two V.A.D.'s were always in attendance. Thus, in the years 1918 and 1919 hundreds of men enjoyed this wonderful outing. By special resolutions of thanks and in other ways these men gave ample evidence of their heartfelt gratitude to their generous benefactors. I have seen many letters from these ex-service men and have read their quaint and earnest entries over their own signatures in the "Visitors' Book" of the "Lady Nanton Convalescent Home", as the place was called. These letters and autographs afford a delightful picture of a happy crowd. Nothing was ever said about the expense of all this, because no one was ever asked or permitted to contribute. Sir Augustus took care cheerfully of all that in his own quiet way. One can only surmise that the expenditure was very considerable, but it was a great delight to Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton to engage in this unique undertaking, by which many broken and discouraged men who had sacrificed and suffered much for their country gathered new hope and strength again. The whole incident furnishes, to my mind, one of the fine illustrations of the facts that the noble parable of the Good Samaritan is still being enacted in our modern day.

In this connection, I would like to quote one or two notes from many similar items that found publication at the time from the grateful soldiers. One is

from Private McLeod, who writes: "Having just arrived back from Lady Nanton's Home, I wish to thank Sister Howe and Miss Constance Nanton, V.A.D., for the happy days of enjoyment they gave me while a guest at the Home. Being a soldier I must admit that there has never been a place which has given me more real enjoyment and which has restored me to a better state of health than I have been in for a long time. My only wish is that those who help us in our illness will be blessed by God's goodness, for those who give to the needy shall never want appreciation."

Another patient writes: "It was my pleasure to spend some time at the Home of Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton, where fifty of our Tuxedo patients are enjoying their hospitality. The staff of the Home consisted of Captain Lougheed, M.O., Sister Howe, Miss Constance Nanton, V.A.D. and Sergeant Peet. During the week days Mr. Edward Nanton or Mr. Paul Nanton take the boys out in their fast motor launch or sail-boat for trips around the islands. Patients also have at their disposal two outboard motor boats which are entirely for their own use, and they arrange picnics up the lake which are greatly enjoyed. I am sure the boys who have been privileged to visit Lady Nanton's Home will long remember their holiday at the Lake of the Woods."

The following is a special expression of appreciation published in the "Threshold", the veteran's paper published at Tuxedo Military Hospital, and signed "G. T. J." It evidently is intended to express the opinion of all the soldiers.

It has been one of the astounding features of the Great War that homes, mansions and even castles have been thrown open to our fighting men and our wounded. Especially is this noticeable in the British Isles, where men and women

of rank and position have given up their magnificent places, content with working for the furtherance of our war aims and the ever-needing comfort of our fighters and wounded. In Canada, while the comparative number of these places is naturally smaller, they are large enough to assure our boys that what part they played has been and is appreciated. We have women, girls and men who could not go to war who have worked hard and long for that one end—Victory and Peace. We have the producers, the Red Cross workers, the War Loan subscribers and the co-operation of thousands of others. The list would be impossible to enumerate. Here is a single instance: Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton's Home at the Lake of the Woods. This splendid place, prior to the war, served as a summer home for Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton and their family. It has been enlarged and now accommodates fifty-three wounded soldiers from Manitoba Military Hospital, giving each man two weeks at one of the finest lakeside resorts in Canada. These men are all from the ranks and are cared for by two nurses and a doctor from Tuxedo hospital. The nurses and doctor have seen service overseas and make it one big happy family. The Home is conducted and maintained by Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton, so military discipline is practically eliminated and the men are guests—guests in every sense of the word.

Some time in October, when the cold weather necessitates the closing of the doors, Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton will have earned the profound gratitude of nearly eight hundred men, and the good that has been done cannot be measured any more than it can be expressed. The writer has had the pleasure of a visit both this year and last year, and has had a chance to note some of the good and the keen enjoyment the boys have taken. One boy who was going away, stood on the wharf, looking wistfully back at the Home and said, "Sister, thank you and Lady Nanton. I feel tons better than when I came." That boy meant it too.

No one understands these boys better than Lady Nanton herself, and when they say that simple "Thank you" it is enough. None could give adequate expression to the great debt of gratitude which they owe to Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton, but they all remember and their benefactors will sympathise and understand.

As is the case with all prominent business men, letters of introduction came to Nanton from all parts of the world, commending to him alike men who were



SIR AUGUSTUS WITH HIS THREE SONS - EDWARD, PAUL AND AUGUSTUS,
1914 - AT LAKE OF THE WOODS



GROUP OF INVALID SOLDIERS AT "THE NANTON HOME",
LAKE OF THE WOODS



looking for investments and men who were down and out and were looking for work of some kind. His files are filled with letters of this type, which were always answered with the utmost care and courtesy. I found in one instance where a little girl, on behalf of some country church, sent him ten tickets, asking if he would sell them to help in the work. Nanton replied kindly that he could not get time to sell the tickets, but that he was glad she was interested in such good work, and enclosed a five dollar bill, the price of the tickets. One hopes that this child preserved the letter from an exceedingly busy man who halted in the midst of pressing duties so that she would not be disappointed.

In regard to investments, enquiries came to Mr. Nanton from all directions. He was a safe adviser. One writes me, "His application to business was methodical and intense. He thoroughly examined into the details of every matter put before him and there seemed to be no point of importance left uncovered when he had made an analysis of a problem." A few years ago, to illustrate his caution, we all recollect the excitement caused by a report as to oil fields at Fort Norman. Hosts of men saw millions in prospect and there was a stampede in this direction. Many enquired of Mr. Nanton, who could have done a rushing brokerage business if he tried. But because he had no personal knowledge of Fort Norman, he utterly refused to advise or to receive anything from anyone for investment there.

Mr. F. L. Patton, well known in Winnipeg, tells me about the very early days when they were boys together in Toronto. They had kindred tastes, not only in business, but in their love of exercise and clean athletics. Horseback riding, canoeing and rowing were amongst their recreations. Backwards and forwards

over the Bay to the Island where they enjoyed camp life, they and others went to and fro, when their work was done. It was the day of that splendid oarsman, Ned Hanlon, who was a champion amongst champions and whose prowess as a rower made him a hero to the lads of his day. No wonder that Patton and Nanton carried this enthusiasm westward, where they and George Galt, Fred Stobart and Walter Kirby and others became the centre of a group, not of anemic and lackadaisical youths, but of strong, virile, enthusiastic and eager young men who were to make their impress upon the whole life of the new land.

Nanton and Patton looked around for some sheet of open water with scope and space such as the bays and lakes of the East. And so they became the earliest to make a summer resort of the Lake of the Woods, a place of remarkable beauty. Nanton was an expert and eager yachtsman and loved the white-crested waves and the tang of the North wind over the historic lake which the Indians and the old fur traders had made their way of trade and commerce and hunting in days far gone past.

When Sir Augustus visited Toronto a few years before his passing away, he took a cruise on the beautiful schooner-yacht, *Zavorah*, owned by his friend Mr. Herrick Duggan, with whom he had sailed in their boyhood days. He was so braced up in health by even the brief cruise that he purchased the yacht, had it overhauled and renamed the *Verre*, hoping to sail again some time over the old familiar waters. But a devoted and laborious life had undermined his fine strength and the hope was not realized.

CHAPTER VII

TWO GREAT DIRECTORATES

Other companies in which A. M. Nanton was a valued and deeply interested director will not mind if I put together in a separate chapter some account of his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway. For the Hudson's Bay Company is the oldest surviving business organization of its kind on the earth, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company is acknowledged to be by land and sea the world's greatest travel and transportation system. These facts give these two organizations an acknowledged preëminence. More than that, there is quite an unusual historical connection between these two bodies. The Hudson's Bay Company, founded in 1670, had its principal sphere of operation in the vast North West. And its trading posts scattered all across this great lone land became the stopping places and the sources of information for explorers and travellers who sent forth accounts of the immense resources of this great area awaiting the advent of settlement. It should be remembered that the Hudson's Bay Company, controlled by Lord Selkirk, planted the first farming colony in the North West. The success of these Selkirk Settlers was one of the elements which led the Canadian Pacific's master builder, Sir William Van Horne, to cast in his lot with the vast country to which he was invited by those who were constructing the pioneer steel trail across Canada.

But we go still one more step back to find the pecu-

liarly close connection between the two great companies under discussion. Mr. Donald A. Smith (later Lord Strathcona) was the leading Hudson's Bay Company officer in Canada when the West became part of Confederation. He was an able and ambitious man, and he saw that the new spirit of the whole country would be incomplete without expressing itself in a railway that would stretch from ocean to ocean. Even more did he see that one of the main objects of Confederation was to make it possible for such a road to be built to conserve the country as a British possession for all time. One need not labour this point, whose force is apparent to all who know the history of the West. Hence Donald A. Smith, knowing all these things, always, it seems to me, cherished the hope that he would become, in some way, instrumental in getting this great work undertaken. We thus find him writing letters to Hudson's Bay men all over the West, telling them to help the surveyors and engineers who were trying to locate a way across the continent on British soil.

Still more as evidence for the historical connection between these two great organizations is the fact that this same Donald A. Smith on his way from Fort Garry to Ottawa by way of St. Paul, was introduced by a former Hudson's Bay man to young James J. Hill, a forceful Canadian with a passion for transportation plans. The ultimate result of this meeting, in brief, was that Messrs. George Stephen, R. B. Angus and Donald A. Smith, with Mr. Hill, took over a derelict railway running from St. Paul westward, and made such fortunes out of it that the Premier of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald, appealed to them to build a railway across Canada, which they did. But Donald A. Smith, the old Hudson's Bay man, was the pivot on which the project of the Canadian Pacific

turned from being a failure as a Government undertaking to its becoming an accomplished fact as a privately-owned and operated concern. Hence another reason for our putting these companies together in one chapter.

We take the older company first in this note on the subject. The Hudson's Bay Company survived all others of its day because, besides being ably administered by the London Board, it had the counsel of efficient and dependable officers and employees in the field of its operations in British North America. That remarkable local Governor of the Company, Sir George Simpson, who guided the destinies of the Company in the North West for forty years, up to 1860, saw the propriety of giving some local self-government and, with the approval of the London Board, he organized the famous Council of Assiniboia, composed of men selected for their standing in various communities. This Council was practically the ruling force, making and administering laws under British methods until the West entered Confederation. After Confederation, the years brought changes innumerable, and the Company noted them with a view to readjustment to meet new conditions. The buffalo vanished and the fur traders found their sphere limited by the incoming of settlement. Except in the far North, the whole situation had changed and this ancient company, recognizing the facts, began to readjust itself to new conditions. Storekeepers on a small scale they always had been at their forts and posts, but the times now demanded that they should keep larger and more splendid commercial establishments in keeping with the modern trend. Men in London, like Lord Strathcona, who knew at first hand the movement taking place in Canada, could advise well as to the Company's future

plans. And from year to year, members of the London Board visited Canada for further personal knowledge of the country and its needs.

But this wise old company saw that more than this was becoming necessary if their undertakings in Canada were to hold their own. And so the London Board decided to form an Advisory Committee for Canada, with headquarters at Winnipeg. Doubtless the personnel of this committee would be carefully discussed and canvassed in London. Only the best men would do—men who knew Canada thoroughly and men of the best judgment and the highest integrity.

Hence we find that when Sir Thomas Skinner, the Deputy-Governor of the Company, with Mr. Leonard D. Cunliffe, a member of the London Committee, paid an official visit to Canada in the autumn of 1911, they asked Sir William Whyte, Mr. A. M. Nanton and Mr. George Galt, all of Winnipeg, to serve as Canadian Advisory Committee with Sir William as Chairman. No wiser choice could have been made. Sir William Whyte, the noted Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific Railway and General Manager of its Western lines, was a man universally respected for his organizing power and loved for his combination of manly qualities. Mr. Nanton had come to the front in the world of finance and was known for his ability and character in Canada and the Old Land. Mr. George Galt, member of a famous Canadian family, himself in wholesale business, was well versed in public affairs and immensely popular. The strong position of the Company in the centres of population in Western Canada, as well as the wise administration of its widely-diversified business interests, is due in no small measure to this Committee and their successors.

And there came further promotion for Mr. Nanton.

When upon the death of Sir William Whyte in 1914 he succeeded him as Chairman of the Canadian Committee, and when in the same year Lord Strathcona, an Empire figure, passed away, leaving a vacancy on the London Board, Mr. Nanton was elected to fill the place. From that time forward, Mr. Nanton acted in the dual capacity of Chairman of the Canadian Advisory Committee (known since 1913 as the Canadian Committee) and also as a member of the London Committee, until his death on the 24th of April, 1925.

One can quite understand how Nanton would put himself into thorough accord with this famous Company which had kept the British Flag floating over half a continent that otherwise would have become an alien possession. He was intensely British himself and he had no doubt studied the great traditions of the organization which, with opportunities to be an autocracy, had exercised such paternal control over half a continent that in the two centuries of its operation under Royal Charter there was never any revolt against its authority. That fact, along with the honourable character of its business methods, would appeal to Nanton, for these were his ideals also.

That he would be of immense service to the Company in relation especially to its Canadian undertakings under the new conditions above mentioned, goes without saying. It is to the credit of the London Board, as well as to Mr. Nanton's credit, to say that many of the new developments in Canada, in the choice of locations for business, the adaptations required to meet the swift changes in circumstances in a rapidly advancing country, were in large measure the result of the counsel of Mr. Nanton and his colleagues in Winnipeg.

Sir Robert Kindersley, a director of the Bank of

England and recognized as one of the Empire's great business men, being then Governor of the Company, came to Canada in 1920 to celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the famous old organization. He was very familiar with the history, and entered with zest into the various pageants and other gatherings staged in connection with this very notable event. And out of his close acquaintance with the situation in Canada, we find Sir Robert at the General Court of Proprietors of the Hudson's Bay Company on the 26th of June, 1923, saying: "Sir Augustus Nanton is really a tower of strength to us in Canada, where he devotes a tremendous amount of time to your affairs. He is, as you know, one of the best-known men in Canada, with a great deal to do, but in spite of that, he devotes a great deal of time to your Company. He is always ready to take trouble over anything, however small, and we all feel a deep debt of gratitude to him." This was a fine tribute from an able man to a colleague who had been of immense assistance in carrying on the work of the Company in Canada, the great sphere of its operations.

When this General Court of Proprietors of the Hudson's Bay Company met two years later, Mr. Charles V. Sale, who had succeeded Sir Robert Kindersley as Governor, gave the principal address at the opening of the Court. He had known Sir Augustus Nanton intimately in connection with the work of the Company in Canada. The death of Sir Augustus had taken place two months before this meeting of the Court, and Governor Sale said:

Ladies and gentlemen, before proceeding with the business of the meeting, I wish to refer to the great loss sustained by your Company in the death of our esteemed colleague, Sir Augustus Nanton, which occurred on the 24th April last.



SIR AUGUSTUS MEREDITH NANTON, 1920

Sir Augustus Nanton had served as a member of your London Board since 1914, and as Chairman of the Canadian Committee since 1912. During this period, which covered those very difficult days of the Great War, Sir Augustus devoted a large amount of time and thought to the affairs of your Company, and he was a tower of strength to the London Committee.

Sir Augustus was, as you all know, a man endowed with great business ability, and, owing to his long residence in Winnipeg, he had a knowledge of Western Canada which was unique and, combined as it always was with a sound judgment, was of the greatest service to your Company. But apart from these qualities, Sir Augustus rendered an infinite service to his country by maintaining at all times the highest standard of commercial morality.

It is, therefore, no ordinary loss which your Company has suffered in his death. His kindly personality and extreme courtesy endeared him to his co-directors and to every member of the staff with whom he came in contact.

I feel sure, ladies and gentlemen, you will like to join the Committee, the Deputy Governor and myself in expressing to Lady Nanton and the members of her family the sincere sympathy of this meeting in their bereavement, and our deep sense of the loss of one who has done so much for the Company and for Canada. (Hear, hear). May I send such a message? (Agreed).

Those present were in deep and full accord with the Governor's tribute and suggestion. A great man, able and influential in the affairs of the Company, worthy of its great history, had passed. But his work will continue to have abiding influence.

At the opening of this chapter we indicated that Mr. Nanton's two great directorates were the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

During the early years of his founding the business of the firm, Mr. Nanton did not take active part in the direction of concerns outside it. But it can be safely asserted that he would take particular notice of the activities of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the con-

struction of which across the Continent, to cement Confederation, was easily the most outstanding movement of the period. Mr. Nanton arrived in Winnipeg the year after the peerless master builder, Mr. Van Horne, had begun the constructive effort of building half a thousand miles of railway westward from Winnipeg in a year. Young Nanton with his aggressive eager spirit would be attracted by the record of these railway builders, whose ploughs and scrapers were making their way through the buffalo wallows, and casting up grades where once only the Red River cart had worn ruts in the deep black soil of the plains. It was the greatest railway building undertaking in the world. It was going forward against extraordinary physical difficulties in the shape of swamps and rocks and mountains, which some authorities declared to be impassable, and it was going on against heart-breaking and nerve-shattering financial conditions. Opponents of the project had done everything they could to close the money centres of the world against what they called a mad project. We can imagine how keenly interested young Nanton would be in this conflict. With his fine, sportsmanlike instincts, he would sympathize with the men who were fighting against terrific odds. And when we add to that the fact that his patron and friend, Sir Edmund B. Osler, was interested in the enterprise, we can quite understand that this young man would watch the whole undertaking with interest and concern. He knew that the men who were the most prominent in the enterprise, George Stephen, Donald A. Smith and R. B. Angus, had no need or desire to enter upon the building of this transcontinental railway to make money, but that, in fact, they were running the risk of losing all they had and being left penniless in their old age. The Government

of Canada, at its wits' end to know how to build the Road, which was both a project and a condition of Confederation, had appealed to them to do this work for their country's sake, and they were trying to do it in the face of extraordinary difficulties.

Later on, as Nanton grew older, he came into close touch with the leading men of the Railway, who learned to recognize his business ability, particularly after the successful manner in which he handled the receivership of the Manitoba & North Western Railway. Between him and Mr. (later Sir) William Whyte there arose a special friendship, and in the year 1901 they made a remarkable trip together to Russia, travelling over the newly opened Trans-Siberian Railway and returning by way of Japan.

There was indeed so much fellowship between Sir William Whyte and Mr. Nanton that they possessed intimate knowledge of the business in which each was engaged. The younger man hoped that this association would long continue unbroken. But as in the course of the years the older man passed on we think the younger man found some comfort in carrying on some of the tasks of his great friend. This is what actually happened in several instances, notably in connection with the directorates of the two companies which are the subject of this chapter.

Directorates in the Canadian Pacific are not attained easily. This remarkable company has been, for a long time, one of the great institutions of Canada. This came about by the careful and cautious but progressive administration of its affairs and by the extraordinary thoroughness of its organization. By the time there came a vacancy on the Board of Directors by the lamented passing of Sir William Whyte in 1914, the special fitness of Mr. Nanton for the kind

of work the Canadian Pacific required, had been fully discovered, and, in a good sense, coveted for the Railway's administration. Not only had Sir William Whyte, who consulted Mr. Nanton almost constantly, discovered it, but Lord Shaughnessy in the President's chair had also found out this fact of Nanton's special and rare gifts for seeing almost at a glance what should be done in any business concern in any situation. Nanton had not come to this height by chance or by influence, or by anything but his own intense and methodical application to business study.

There were two vacancies in the directorate of the Canadian Pacific when the Board met in Montreal on May 11th, 1914. These vacancies were caused by the passing of Lord Strathcona and Sir William Whyte. There are men who say that for sheer indomitable determination to see the Road through, no one surpassed Lord Strathcona, this rugged Scot whose prominent brows always reminded us of the craggy frontlets of rock in his native Highland glens. By common consent he was called in to drive the last spike at Craigellachie in 1885. For some years Lord Strathcona, owing to his great age, had not taken active share in administration, and the vacancy left by his death was not filled at once. But the Board did immediately appoint Mr. Nanton to succeed Sir William Whyte. The West was a very vast sphere of the Road's operation, and Mr. Nanton's knowledge of it was so extensive and unique that his aid would be invaluable. He had been in the West before the Railway was completed, and he knew all about its trials and its triumphs.

From that time onward to the end of his life, Mr. Nanton took a deep and active interest in the business of the Road. Though resident half a continent away from headquarters in Montreal, he attended the meet-

ings of the Board almost without interruption, and became a recognized factor in all the plans of the Company. He was made a member of the Executive of the Board in 1918, which was an unusual tribute considering the distance which he lived from the head office in Montreal. A few months after he went on the Directorate the Great War broke across the world and Canada wheeled into line with the Motherland. Once again the sons of the Motherland rallied around her,—

Who's that a-calling—
The old Sea Mother calls
In the pride of the children that she bore,

We know from another chapter in this book what Mr. Nanton did throughout the critical years of the War. And history tells us what the Canadian Pacific Railway Company did. Lord Shaughnessy, as soon as the War broke out, placed the whole resources of this immense organization at the disposal of the Empire. One knows how thoroughly Mr. Nanton, as Director, would be in accord with that action. The splendid services rendered to the Empire and the cause of the Allies, by the Canadian Pacific, on land and sea, need not be chronicled here, since I have written of them in a book of history on that Company. But we know with what remarkable precision the vast organization was thrown into the conflict, while in an extraordinary degree the public in Canada and elsewhere was served during the whole period.

When Lord Shaughnessy passed on, saying feelingly to his able successor, Mr. E. W. Beatty, "Take good care of the Canadian Pacific Railway—it is a great Canadian company and a great Canadian enterprise," he was committing an important trust to one whom he regarded very highly. All that need be said now

is that Lord Shaughnessy was not mistaken in handing on his task to Mr. Beatty.

President Beatty, like the other men of the Board of Directors, had strong regard for Mr. Nanton, both as a man of great business capacity and as a friend. Mr. Beatty rejoiced when the King bestowed on Mr. Nanton the honour of knighthood, and sent him the following characteristic telegram:—

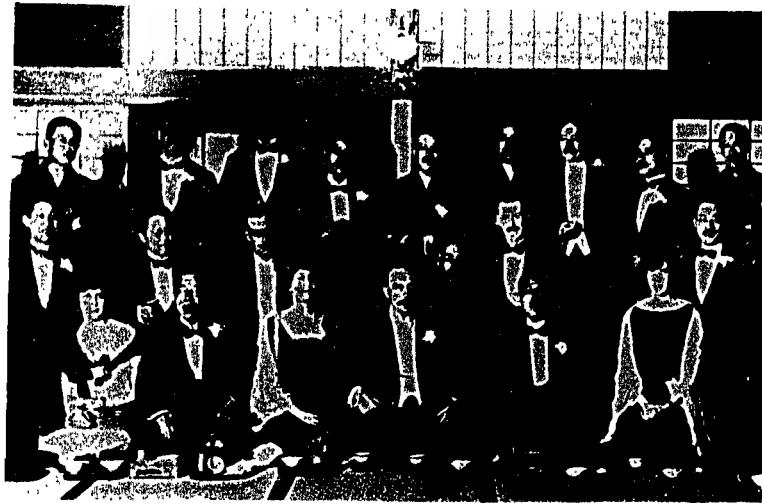
I have never read anything that gave me more pleasure—it was so well deserved that I feel like congratulating Lloyd George and the King. I hope Lady Nanton and yourself will live long to enjoy this and many other honours. Please convey to her my very best wishes.

In 1924 Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton and some of their family and a party of friends took a trip around the world on the great Canadian Pacific ship, the *Empress of Canada*. At Yokohama, Sir Augustus made a notable speech at a luncheon on board the ship, when many Japanese officials and others were guests of the Company. It was very much in keeping with his own sympathetic nature for Sir Augustus to make a most appropriate and feeling allusion to the terrible earthquake that had laid the city in ruins the year before. At the time of that earthquake, it will be recalled that the Canadian Pacific ship, the *Empress of Australia*, was just casting off from the wharf to sail for Vancouver. The ship was in command of Captain S. Robinson, who, manifesting not only splendid courage but masterly seamanship in that crisis hour, cancelled all thought of leaving, and for weeks turned his great vessel into a rescue and hospital ship, placing all the Company's supplies and stores at the disposal of those in need.

Referring to this famous incident, Sir Augustus said "When your great disaster took place, we in



A GROUP OF CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY DIRECTORS
Sir Augustus at left.



ON WORLD CRUISE
Dinner party at the Koyakwan (Maple Club) Shiba, Tokyo, given
by His Excellency the Vice-Minister of Railways, N. Okano,
May 6, 1924.

Left to right, sitting--Miss Constance Nanton, C. Inomata, Lady Nanton, Sir Augustus Nanton, His Excellency N. Okano, Miss Marguerite Nanton; kneeling, third from left, Brig.-Gen H. C. Nanton, C.B., C.I.E., R.E., standing, third from right, Mr. F. L. Patton.



Canada received it with a great shock. We sympathized with you, and the first thought we had was 'What can we do to help Japan?' So far as the Canadian Pacific was concerned, we naturally turned to our ships and officers in Japan. At first we received no news, but we soon realized that we had here, or near here, a magnificent ship in command of an officer in whom the Company had the greatest confidence. We afterwards heard what he did. He did, in our opinion, everything that it was possible for a human being to do under the circumstances. He disregarded the risk of his life and the lives of his officers and crew; he disregarded the risk of a very valuable ship—for what? To help in saving human lives and in caring for the wounded. In Captain Robinson, the Canadian Pacific is proud. I need not say anything further regarding him, because you all know what he did, and we, the Canadian Pacific, are thankful that he was here to do it. Gentlemen, we ask you to accept the sympathies of the Canadian Pacific in the great disaster through which you have recently passed."

Incidents like this of a prominent director saying, as I later heard President Beatty say in Vancouver, that the Canadian Pacific was proud and thankful for the opportunity of being of use in a crisis of human need, contradict the superficial theory that companies have no heart or soul. Companies are what their directors make them in their relation to other human beings. The incident at Yokohama cost the Canadian Pacific tens of thousands in money, by reason of Captain Robinson cancelling the return schedule and remaining at the scene of the disaster, putting everything at the disposal of those in need. But as one who knows the history of the Company from the beginning, I can say that, through the fifty years of their fine record, there

is no incident of which the Company is more proud than this, and no man in their employ is more highly esteemed than this brave humanitarian captain.

It was not long after his return from this world tour that Sir Augustus, owing to his election to the Presidency of the Dominion Bank, left Winnipeg to live in Toronto with his family. When he passed on there as related in a later chapter, the Canadian Pacific, with which he always said he was so pleased and proud to be associated, did all it could to show honour to the memory of one who was so greatly esteemed in the Company for his able administrative assistance and so greatly loved for his splendid qualities as a man.

CHAPTER VIII

OTHER CONCERNS

SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON was a Director in some thirty business concerns, a larger number than we could describe in any detailed way. In practically all of these he was a Director long before the days of his knighthood. He was asked to go on Boards, not by reason of his title, but on account of the fact that his well-recognized ability and leadership in business increased the prestige and added to the effectiveness of any concern with which the public knew him to be connected. This does not in any way minimise the work, reliability, zeal and power of other men around him. Most of these were eminent in all these qualities. But his record for successful handling of anything he undertook was such that, for people generally, the name of Nanton in any venture had a singular kind of magnetism. This arose partly on account of his business thoroughness and his well-known habit of clearly understanding a project and its possible ramifications. But it was also due to the inflexible and uncompromising stand he had taken from the beginning against anything in the nature of plunging and "wild-catting", with all the dangers that had come to be associated in the popular mind with these words and the practices they indicated. The result of all these facts was that Sir Augustus was President, Vice-President or Director in many of the foremost business concerns operating in Western Canada and elsewhere.

In this chapter I will speak only of a few of the

companies whose interests were largely western, or which were organized or extended mainly because of the development of the western part of the Dominion. With these, naturally, I would be most familiar. The interests of Sir Augustus were, of course, Dominion-wide, yet in view of his residence for forty years in Canada, west of the Great Lakes, it is only reasonable to think that concerns which specially affected the West or which operated largely in the West, would in a particular sense be part of his life.

Those of us who were born in the West, as I was, were probably rather backward in thinking that the West itself might become the originator of large business enterprises. In my boyhood days, we knew practically nothing about banks and insurance and loan companies, except that they existed in older parts of Canada and elsewhere. We were satisfied and pleased when these began to establish Western branches and agencies, as we thought that only the Old Country and the East could furnish the necessary capital and reserves to make things safe.

So I remember being quite fascinated by the adventurous spirit of men like Mr. J. H. Brock, who about 1890 began to found the Great West Life Assurance Company, with headquarters in Winnipeg, and therefore indigenous of Western soil. Brock had great ability and tremendous zeal about anything in which he believed. He was the head and front of the effort to get people to believe that such a company could be founded in the West and become an important concern. But he no doubt had gone over the whole matter with leaders in business circles in Winnipeg who were part of the movement. Nanton had his hands full, for his own firm's work was only being built up, and it required that close attention which his keen sense of

trusteeship demanded. But he gave his support to the Great West Life movement and became a shareholder practically from the start, a Director in 1898 and Vice-President in 1910.

The Great West Life has had unique success, due at the beginning to the energy of the Managing Director, Mr. J. H. Brock, and the high standing of the men on the Board who commanded the confidence of the country. Amongst these, Mr. Alexander Macdonald, a man of great business ability and aggressiveness, was the first President, and so continued throughout the formative years until old age. Sir Daniel H. McMillan and Mr. R. T. Riley were on the Board from the beginning and are still active. Others I recall who have now passed on, were these: J. H. Ashdown, George F. Galt, James McLenaghan, Stephen Nairn and W. B. Scarth, who with a few more made a strong organization.

Mr. R. T. Riley was associated in many business ways with Mr. Nanton all through the forty years of the latter's career in the West. They were very frank with each other and both could be very decisive, but all the way through they held each other in mutual esteem and high regard.

It is generally known that the reason why Mr. Nanton was asked to come on the Board of the Great West Life in 1898 was two-fold. The one reason was that his close association with men like Sir Edmund Osler and other very prominent men of business in Eastern Canada would have, as it did have, marked influence in securing in the East larger expansion of the business of the Great West Life. The other reason was that Mr. Nanton's expert advice was particularly desired in view of the growing income of the Great West Life which had to be invested.

In that connection I have recently come across a Press account of a meeting of the Board of the Great West Life in Winnipeg in February, 1914. In the course of that meeting, Mr. R. T. Riley gave an address from which I take the following extract. After speaking on other matters Mr. Riley said :

I wish further to say a word of congratulation and appreciation to our esteemed friend and colleague, Mr. A. M. Nanton. Mr. Nanton has always been regarded as one of the most active business men in Western Canada but it is only recently that he has been coming into his own in other respects.

I am glad to know that his ability and services have been recognized, not only over the whole of Canada, but across the seas, for within the last few years he has been elected a member of the Boards of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, one the oldest, the other the largest corporation doing business in the Dominion of Canada.

Not only have there been the marks of appreciation that I have indicated, but in addition to this I notice that his name has been brought up for special mention at the Institute of Actuaries in Great Britain. Actuaries come to their decisions after the most careful mathematical calculations, and they get the habit of being very exact as to their conclusions. And this is what a very prominent member of them had to say at one of their recent meetings. I refer to Mr. A. D. Besant, General Manager of one of the oldest and most conservative Life companies in England, the Clerical, Medical & General, who said :

"Mr. Nanton, of Winnipeg, was one of the most cautious men that could possibly be found to undertake investments. He had acted as agent, not only for more than one English office, but for many individual clients and corporations, and I believe that the sums which Mr. Nanton had lent successfully, without a penny being lost, ran into many millions."

After he quoted this fine testimony, Mr. Riley added :

I am sure that we all feel gratified at Mr. Nanton's success as we all know very well that he has thoroughly earned every honour that has been, or will be conferred upon him.

At an early period in the history of Southern Alberta, the Galt family began operations in the Lethbridge district, with varied interests in railways, coal mining and river navigation. The irrigation of the drier areas was also undertaken. In 1904, all the Galt interests in Southern Alberta were consolidated and called the Alberta Railway and Navigation Company, and of this new Company Mr. Nanton was appointed Managing Director. The assets were very considerable, consisting of land and town lots in the Lethbridge district, a hundred miles of railway operating out of Lethbridge, the new irrigation system covering a large area and the Galt Coal Mines. Mr. Nanton held this position for eight years until the Canadian Pacific Railway took over the Company to become part of their system. During the period mentioned, there was tremendous development in the Southern Alberta country, due to Mr. Nanton's efforts and to the work of the General Manager of the Company, Mr. P. L. Naismith, whose name was later linked inseparably with the Natural Resources Department of the Canadian Pacific. Mr. Nanton gave a great deal of attention to the work during his period as Managing Director, and a town in the district is named after him, as were streets in some twelve towns and cities in that part of the West, indicating the wide recognition of his work for the country. The face of the country was changed greatly for the better by the work done by Mr. Nanton and Mr. Naismith. Speaking of this time of development, Mr. Naismith once said to me: "It was a pleasure and a great privilege to be associated with such a human, kind-hearted and considerate man." During the last illness of Sir Augustus, there were many enquiries and telegrams of anxiety and sympathy from this district, showing how deep an impres-

sion he had made on that whole area by his able and painstaking efforts to improve conditions and add to the comfort and prosperity of the people.

During my early days in Winnipeg, I was much interested in the erection of a massive flour mill near the old Louise Bridge on the Red River by the Ogilvie Milling Company. The headquarters of the business were in Montreal, but the vast grain fields of the new west opened up a new and greater area for the trade in wheat and flour and grains of various kinds. In earlier days on the Red River, amongst our own people the "quern" consisting of two stones, of which the upper one was turned by hand, was the primitive method of getting wheat into flour. Later came the windmill, which operated or not according to the weather. In times of protracted calm I have known a good deal of scarcity in bread, and the farmers traded and borrowed a good deal amongst themselves till a favouring wind would arise and relieve the situation. In process of time there were water mills like Taits and Inksters where, by erecting a dam across a creek, enough water could be let loose at times to turn the big wheel that set the millstones in motion. Steam mills developed on a small scale, but the Ogilvie Milling Company came in with a big establishment which dwarfed everything we had known in that line. This Company became an important factor in western development, and it was understood that Mr. Nanton was interested in it from the outset. Some years later on the death of Sir Edward Clouston, a prominent financial man in Montreal, Mr. Nanton was elected to take his place as Director of the Company. A financial journal noted the election and said it was an open secret that the Company had been trying for some years to get Mr. Nanton on the Directorate. This

journal went on to say that Mr. Nanton had been so much in demand for Directorates and active participation in so many concerns that he had not felt able to assume further responsibilities, but he had at last consented to accept a place on the Directorate of the Ogilvie business. The journal went on to congratulate the Company on securing so valuable a man.

I recall Winnipeg when there were no street cars and practically no streets other than trails, and I can therefore remember the excitement when ties and rails were laid down on the old Main Street and horse-drawn cars were introduced. Then Portage Avenue and Kennedy Street to the Court House were served, to the great delight of us law students who disliked the long walk in muddy weather. But the age of electricity was at hand and Winnipeg was one of the cities to begin early on the new motive power. There was trouble over franchises, but eventually the horse-drawn cars went out of business and the Winnipeg Electric Company began very extensive construction to meet the needs of a fast growing city. Expansion of a street railway system, not only in the more densely populated wards of the city but to suburban and ultra-suburban areas, involves heavy outlay and sometimes rather small income. This would probably be in itself no cause for anxiety, as the population extends with the line. But the advent of the motor car and the omnibus and the truck with the free lance jitney, cuts into the receipts of any electric line which has to be maintained in running order. When to all this we add the terrific dislocation caused by the Great War, we are not surprised to find that the Winnipeg Electric Railway was hard hit and that for some years after 1915 it paid no dividends. Sir William Whyte had been Vice-President from 1892 till the time of his death in the spring

of 1914, and it was well known that his estate was largely invested in the Company. Sir Augustus Nanton was asked to accept the Presidency of the Company. He took office on the 12th of February, 1919, and continued in that capacity till the 23rd of August, 1924, when he was about to leave to reside in Toronto. He came to the Presidency at a very trying and difficult time in Winnipeg's history—that is, just after the close of the War, when there was much fluctuation in values and when men generally were restless and rather too easily influenced by irresponsible demagogues. What was intended by some as a revolutionary coup took the form of a general strike in Winnipeg in May 1919, when the motormen and conductors and shopmen went out on sympathetic strike. It was a bad time for the Company to have such a thing happen, and my experience and observation lead me to say that men do not generally profit by such movements. The financial condition of the Company was not good at the time for, as stated, the dislocation of business by the War followed by extensive jitney competition, placed the company in a difficult position.

One who was through it all writes me as follows:

During the period of his incumbency of the presidency, Sir Augustus undoubtedly was a tower of strength and was in a large degree responsible for rehabilitating the financial condition of the Company and putting it in a much better and sounder shape. His outstanding character and financial ability unquestionably were of great value to the Company during this troublesome period.

This, I think, will be taken as a correct and careful statement of the facts, without in any way minimising the ability and energy of those who under the President's general oversight directed the operations of the Company. In the last year of Sir Augustus' Presi-

dency the Company paid the first dividend since the year 1915.

In this connection it is very interesting and important to note that Sir Augustus made reference to the Winnipeg Electric in his farewell speech at the great banquet given him on the eve of his leaving Winnipeg. Referring to an address made at a previous gathering by Mr. Travers Sweatman, K.C., President of the Board of Trade, who was also Chairman at the farewell banquet, Sir Augustus congratulated Mr. Sweatman on that recent speech on Winnipeg's position and the need for developing industries, and said he concurred heartily with Mr. Sweatman. "Your President in that speech", said Sir Augustus "mentioned the Hydro and the Winnipeg Electric and indicated that they were both necessary. I am just severing my connection with the Winnipeg Electric and, therefore, I think I can speak more freely to-night than I have ever been able to do before. I am sure that the Boards and the Managements in the past and in the present feel that the differences and the misunderstandings between the two interests should be forgotten. They believe that the two concerns should act in the live-and-let-live spirit, for the simple reason that if they are both a success it will be to the advantage of the citizens of Winnipeg as a whole. It should not be forgotten that the Winnipeg Electric is one of your greatest all-the-year-round employers of labour." In that closing statement Sir Augustus manifests his life-long concern for the steady employment of men who with their families compose so large and important an element in the community. He had himself suffered a good deal when agitators had persuaded men to cease working. But that did not interfere with

his interest in the men even though they acted at times under unwise leadership to their own loss.

A study of the Directorates and Presidencies held by Sir Augustus reveal the fact that it was Western development that was a sort of passion with him in connection with business. He represented Trust Companies, Insurance Companies, Bridge Companies, Iron and Steel Works, Manufactures and such like, whose headquarters were in Eastern Canada or the Old Land, and he represented them to their great advantage in the extension of their business in every case. But, in addition to those we have written of already in more detail, concerns like the Manitoba Power, Canada Saskatchewan Land Company, Crescent Creamery, Winnipeg Western Land, Manitoba Bridge and Iron, Miller-Morse Hardware Company, Manitoba Cartage Company, Calgary and Edmonton Land and some others, occupied a large portion of his time and attention, to the great gain of the western country.

During the years of incessant activity, he took opportunity to found recreative organizations connected with phases of outdoor life and exercise, in which he believed strongly, even though others in the end got more out of them than he did himself. The St. Charles County Club is one of the fine recreation resorts of Winnipeg, its grounds picturesquely laid out on the Assiniboine River. Its golf links and other attractions make it a boon to the city dweller to whom exercise is a necessity. But not many know that it was Sir Augustus Nanton who originally looked over the place and personally purchased the two hundred or more acres, which later on were acquired by the Club on terms most advantageous to it. Though he did not play golf the members made him President of the Golf Club in grateful appreciation.



SIR AUGUSTUS AND LADY NANTON
1924



A fine yachtsman, as he had been a splendid rower, he handled his own craft with great skill and enthusiasm. For three years he was Commodore of the Royal Lake of the Woods Yacht Club on the beautiful island-dotted Lake of the Woods.

A lover of horses and a fine rider, he was one of the foremost to found the Hunt Club and the Horse Show, which gave opportunity for the fine exercise of riding and driving. It was no doubt due to his careful habits and his love of the open air life that he developed the physical strength which enabled him to accomplish so much in those years of war and anxiety when he drew on his reserve force to accomplish almost incredible things for his country.

CHAPTER IX

ON LEAVING WINNIPEG

It was the call to the important and responsible office of President of the Dominion Bank, with headquarters in Toronto, that led Sir Augustus Nanton to leave Winnipeg for the capital city of Ontario. Toronto was the place of his birth, the scene of his early life, and the place where formative influences of the best kind had given trend and force to his career. He had always kept in close touch with Toronto, not only for the sake of family associations, but because of his intimate business connections there.

But there is nothing to indicate that he wished to leave Winnipeg. It was the city of his adoption and the chief scene and centre of his wonderful success. It was there he had found remarkable opportunities for the exercise of his commanding gifts. It was in Winnipeg he had built his own beautiful home and there his family had grown up to years of activity. There the friendships had been formed in social, business, recreational and church life for forty years, and we know that these ties were very strong. In fact, he said that he and Lady Nanton might go away, but they would still regard Winnipeg as their home. To some of us who knew all this, even though we were at a distance at the time, the news that Nanton was leaving Winnipeg came as a distinct surprise.

But once more he followed what he felt was the path of duty. And once more he accepted a prominent and important position, not because he had sought it, but

because those who had the filling of that position by their appointment, felt that he should occupy it, by reason of his ability and wide influence as a man of business.

It was the Dominion Bank, as noted above, that by the voice of its Directors in a meeting held on August 12th, 1924, called Sir Augustus to be President. The Dominion Bank was founded in 1869 by a group of prominent business men in the Toronto district. Confederation had recently been accomplished and the result was the Dominion of Canada. The name Dominion in this connection is by quite general historical consent credited to Sir Leonard Tilley, one of the Fathers of Confederation, who saw in the project of a Canada which would eventually stretch from ocean to ocean, a fulfilment of the words of the 72nd Psalm: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea." Whether they may be the origin of the designation "Dominion" or not, it is certain that the Bank we are discussing took its name from the new Confederation and called itself the Dominion Bank. The main strength of the Bank is in Ontario, where the branches are numerous, but it is also found doing its good share of banking business clear through to the West Coast.

The Presidents before Sir Augustus were Mr. James Austin, Sir Frank Smith and Sir Edmund Osler, all of whom had taken active part in various ways, in establishing the institution. Nanton had grown up somewhat in a Dominion Bank atmosphere, by reason of his almost lifelong connection with Sir Edmund. So much was this the case that Nanton, shortly after his arrival in Winnipeg, wrote that he felt "somewhat lost in a place without a branch of the Dominion Bank". He kept the matter of opening a branch in Winnipeg before

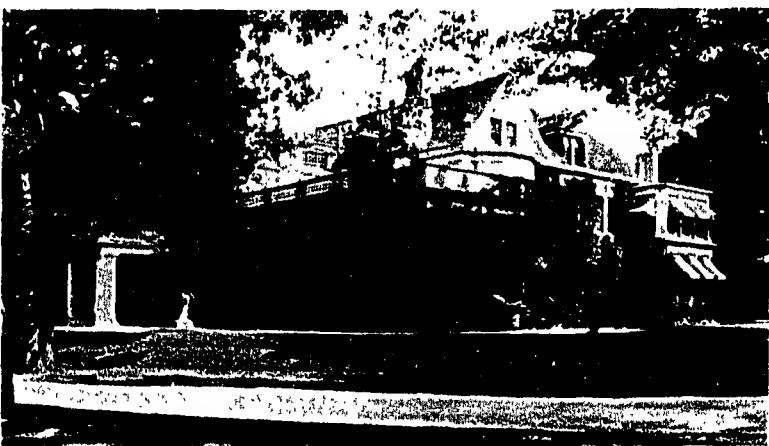
the Directorate and this was done in 1897. Other branches in the West were opened later. In 1907 Mr. Nanton was elected a Director and in 1919 was elected one of the two Vice-Presidents, the other being Mr. Albert W. Austin. Later Sir Augustus, on motion of Mr. Austin, was called to the Presidency, succeeding Sir Edmund Osler, who had just recently passed away. Sir Edmund had had a most distinguished career, and his name, a very symbol for honour and integrity as well as business ability, had been a source of great strength to the Bank.

There was a singular appropriateness in the fact that the mantle of this able business leader had fallen upon Nanton, who, as a boy, had entered the office of Osler over forty-five years before, had won the confidence, admiration and affection of his early employer, whom the younger man had looked up to with respect and esteem during all these years. The Directors of the Bank knew that on every consideration they were making a wise choice when they called Sir Augustus to occupy Sir Edmund's place.

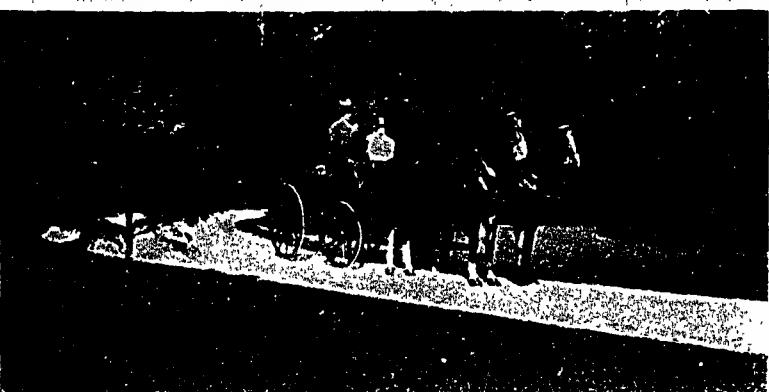
The appointment of Sir Augustus met with the greatest possible favour. In the published opinion of financial journals on both sides of the sea, the Directors of the Bank had "added to the prestige of the Institution by calling Sir Augustus Nanton, leading man of affairs in Western Canada, to its Presidency." This was the general tenor of financial papers, which also quoted by name the large number of important concerns with which Sir Augustus was connected as President or Director. The newspaper press in Toronto, in special articles, expressed great satisfaction and pleasure in the appointment which would bring back to his boyhood home the Toronto lad who had gone to Winnipeg so early and who was to come



"THE NANTON HOME", LAKE OF THE WOODS
As used for Convalescent Soldiers.



"KILMORIE", WINNIPEG—SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON'S RESIDENCE



SIR AUGUSTUS NANTON WITH ONE OF HIS DAUGHTERS



back after having achieved so much and made such a great name in the vast new spaces of the West.

In the West there was, of course, widespread appreciation of the honour, but this was mingled with keen regret when it was known that the new President would have to move to the headquarters of the Bank in Toronto. In the first paragraph of an article in *Canadian Finance*, we find this excellent summary of the situation:--

While the citizens of the Canadian North West as a whole will feel gratified that a Western man has been highly honoured by an election to the Presidency of the Dominion Bank, there will be a widespread and genuine regret that the occupancy of that post will necessitate the removal of Sir Augustus Nanton from Winnipeg to take up his permanent residence in his native city of Toronto.

Expressions of sincere regret were voiced by all in Winnipeg when they heard the announcement. One veteran of the West remarked: "Sir Augustus Nanton has prospered in the West, but the West in general and Winnipeg in particular have prospered a hundred-fold because of his personal progress and his outstanding qualities of citizenship."

A well-known Winnipeg business man telegraphed:

Men of all connections here realize honour done you but only talk of the tremendous loss to Winnipeg if you leave us. I personally feel ill to think of our city without you.

A Winnipeg acquaintance wrote:

As a citizen, wise counsellor, and a man of affairs you will be greatly missed. The East gets a large gain at our expense. I can truthfully say that my life has been enriched from having had the pleasure of knowing and following your business career.

The Western Superintendent of one of the large banks wrote to a friend:

Please convey my respects to Sir Augustus Nanton and congratulate him on his new appointment. At the same time I hear with great regret of his move to Toronto. Winnipeg and the West can ill spare its best citizen and I regard his leaving as the greatest loss that has occurred in my time.

And so Winnipeg and the West accepted the unavoidable and prepared to give their distinguished fellow-citizen a suitable farewell. There were a great many functions connected with the various concerns with which Sir Augustus was associated, and throughout all these intimate farewells there ran the distinct note of personal emotion. Men with whom he had been associated for forty years in the life of a country which had grown into greatness from the pioneer stage could not lightly part from one who had played so large a part in that development. After the fashion of men, they tried to hide their feelings, but they and others knew that tides of affectionate regrets were near to breaking through the dykes of their efforts at reserve.

The leave-taking of the more formal kind, though it, too, was at times swept by emotion, was arranged by the Greater Winnipeg Board of Trade, which drew around a great banquet table in the Royal Alexandra Hotel, not only its own members, but all the citizens of various walks in life who could be accommodated in this large hall.

Before the main event of the evening, brief addresses were given by Mr. Travers Sweatman, K.C., President of the Board of Trade; Sir James Aikins, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba; Mr. John Bracken, Premier of Manitoba; Archbishop Matheson, Primate of all Canada; Sir Hugh John Macdonald; Mr. George F. Galt; Mr. T. R. Deacon; Mr. Hugh Sutherland; and Mr. D. C. Coleman. A letter was read from President E. W. Beatty of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who

could not be present. After expressing his regret at not being able to leave Montreal at the time, Mr. Beatty says:

I do not wonder that the members of your Board are glad to avail themselves of the opportunity of doing honour to probably the most outstanding man in Western Canada. He is one of the greatest of the numerous contributions the West has made to the Canadian Pacific enterprise, and I would have welcomed the opportunity of publicly acknowledging our obligations to him.

I am glad for his own sake that he is going East, and will still retain an association with important Canadian institutions. His knowledge of the West, its problems and its needs, will be of great value in the East, where I am sorry to say there still exists a good deal of misunderstanding of what these problems and needs really are.

Your guest of honour, always a warm friend and close business associate of my own, represents the highest type of Canadian citizen, and his ability, fairness and vision have earned for him the appreciation and the affection of almost as many men in the East as in the West, where he is so well known. While Winnipeg loses, in his moving to Toronto, a very distinguished citizen, the West will never lose his support and his interest, and as his business affiliations are such that they extend over the whole of Canada, the benefit of his knowledge and judgment will not be lost to the country.

With kind personal regards, believe me

Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd.) E. W. BEATTY.

As one paper said in its headlines to its article on the banquet: "Church, State, professional and commercial circles were all worthily represented." The tenor of all the speeches was to the same general effect, speaking of the immense services rendered to the West, to Canada and the Empire by Sir Augustus, the sense of loss sustained by his departure from the city that had been the scene of his great work, and the hope that he would find congenial tasks in the life of the city of Toronto to which he was going.

Mr. George W. Allan, a friend of forty years standing, and one of the most prominent professional men in Winnipeg, read the address, which was beautifully engraved and so illuminated as to be in itself a work of art. The address to Sir Augustus was as follows:

Coming to the West as a young man in 1883, you have given to Western Canada the best part of your life. Not only have you seen the growth of Winnipeg from a small and scattered hamlet to a large and modern metropolis, and of Western Canada from an unpopulated and unproductive territory to several provinces with many towns and cities, and with a well-developed agricultural, manufacturing and commercial life, but you have had a large share in such growth.

You have been active in the sale, settlement, irrigation and improvement of our lands, in the laying out and selling of our townsites, in the marketing and milling of our grain, in the development of our live stock industry, in the opening of our mines, in the utilization of our forests, in the construction and operation of our steam and electric railways and electric plants, in the manufacture and sale of building material, machinery and implements; in the establishment and work of our banks, trust, loan, insurance and other financial corporations.

Confidence in you led the investing public of older Canada, England and Scotland to provide capital so necessary for this new country. You have built up a large business in the fields of brokerage, loaning, insurance and finance, and your services have been sought by many organizations doing business here, and these have been willingly and graciously rendered. In fact, it is difficult to name any field of creative work which has not benefitted by your thought and care, and your associates bear glad testimony to the pleasure it has been to work with you.

Our benevolent, charitable, educational and religious institutions have had in you a true and generous friend. Sport and athletics have also shared your interest, and horsemanship, golf, yachting and rowing owe much to you.

Of recent years your activities have extended throughout the whole of Canada, and that wider field has now taken you from Winnipeg.

Your services during the Great War were many and important. Loyal to your King, devoted to the British Empire,

and vigorous in strengthening the ties that make Canada part of that Empire, the honour conferred by your King upon you in 1917, when you were created a Knight Bachelor, was worthily bestowed.

Endowed with an able mind in a sound body, governed by principles of integrity, following habits of industry, inspired by the spirit of service, helpfulness and good will, your contributions to the foundations of life in this new nation, and its development extending over more than forty years, has been a large one, and can not be measured in words. Western Canada has been indeed fortunate in having you as a leading citizen for so long a time.

We congratulate you heartily on what you have accomplished and we thank you warmly for what you have done for our city, our province, our country and our Empire. You no longer reside among us, yet, knowing your loyalty to friends and associates, we feel confident that your active interest in all that affects us will continue throughout your life. We extend our sincere good wishes for many more years of happiness for you and Lady Nanton.

In testimony whereof, we, members of the Winnipeg Board of Trade and other citizens, have signed our names this sixteenth day of December, 1924.

The signatures to this remarkably fine and wide-reaching address ran up into the hundreds, and included the names of the foremost men in the city and elsewhere in the West, men of practically all vocations and all classes in the country.

The reading of the address was accompanied by applause and at the close of the reading there was a tremendous outburst of cheering. A Press report says: "Lady Nanton, who with several other ladies had seats in the dining room, was not forgotten, either by the speakers or when the assembly rose to cheer her distinguished husband. She was also heartily cheered."

When Sir Augustus rose to reply, he received an ovation, the great audience cheering again and again. His reply was characteristically modest and brief. He said the effect of the eulogistic speeches and the ad-

dress upon him were simply overpowering and he was unable to adequately express his great appreciation. He gave a word picture of what Winnipeg looked like when he first saw it in 1883, and recalled that the first person he knew in the town at that time was Mr. George W. Allan, who had just read the address. Sir Augustus then described a tour of the West he had made in 1883, and stated that the conclusion he came to in the autumn of that year was that he could not imagine any country to have better prospects than Western Canada. And then he added: "I have not changed my opinion since." This was greeted by the audience with tremendous enthusiasm. It was really a striking statement, for to us who were born in the West, the opinion of Sir Augustus, formed forty years before this farewell occasion, betokened an astonishingly accurate judgment on the part of a young newcomer. He had come to the West, as mentioned in our opening chapter, in a depressing time, and when the average of Western feeling was practically pessimistic. But he had refused to take colour from rather blue surroundings, had examined the country for himself and had come to the opinion he had kept undisturbed during the forty years of varying fortune in the country.

Sir Augustus then reviewed the leading features in the development of the West during the forty years, and exhorted the men there to preserve a spirit of unity, free from any petty differences and anything that would hinder united action in the interests of the country and its people. Sir Augustus, who was a very keen observer, added a most important statement when he said, "I feel it my duty to sound a note of warning and alarm. The hope of this country is our youth, and there are teachings going on here behind closed doors that are a menace to these same youth. We welcome

good foreigners to this country, who respect the Christian religion, who desire to become good Canadians, to make homes and observe the laws of this country. But those who have come here without this desire, without this purpose, and who teach sentiments behind closed doors hostile to our country and its institutions, I believe these should be firmly asked to leave this country."

Most thinking men will consider this an exceedingly wise observation and a much-needed piece of advice, though a great many would not have the courage to give it. There is need to hearken to it in Canada. Men come to this land of free opportunity and unexcelled law and order, so that every one who is willing to do honest work can make his way. They come from lands where despotism and tyranny and oppression have prevailed, and they apparently do not see that these conditions do not prevail in Canada. And so they import into this new country the spites and resentments and insubordination which they developed in the lands from which they came. They resent our well-organized conditions, intended to encourage and protect all good citizens, and they attack our sound institutions with revolutionary and inflammatory bitterness. These incendiaries in human society are a nuisance to a well-ordered country like Canada and a hindrance to their own success and that of others. They should be firmly admonished to subside, and if they fail to take the admonition they should be deported whence they came. These atheistic God-defiant communists are undesirable citizens, because, having no true standard by which to guide their actions, they become a menace, as Sir Augustus said, to this country. Let us remember what this man of

keen mind and honest heart said, after much experience and observation.

There was a fine, even if pathetic human note in the closing words of Sir Augustus when he said, "I have lived in Winnipeg some forty years. My wife came here as a child. All our children were born here. Although I am leaving at the call of duty, we will always feel that our best love, our real home is Winnipeg."

The occasion was one which will be long remembered in the West, and the words of the distinguished guest will not be forgotten.

It is well known that Lady Nanton would prefer to remain in the background in connection with the writing of this life story of Sir Augustus. Her desire is to be known simply as a helpmate to her distinguished husband. A lady in Winnipeg, an intimate friend of the family, writing concerning Sir Augustus, speaks of "his happy, hospitable home, with its dignity and charm under the gentle influence of Lady Nanton."

However, one who attempts to write the life of a man must take into account the influences that helped to mould his career. In this case one could not, in an honest biography, omit some particular notice, however brief, of Lady Nanton. Hence in this chapter on "leaving Winnipeg", perhaps no writing in detail would be nearly so vivid as the simple record of how the women of Winnipeg claimed the privilege of having a share in the farewell. One day Lady Nanton's son showed me a very handsome large folio, beautifully bound and subscribed by almost innumerable signatures. There was also a very fine silver box containing an exquisite brooch. The great folio was an address. On the opening page was this brief poem:

If the pen's a mighty weapon
There are times it cannot write;
If the tongue's to boasting given
Then 'tis silent here tonight,
For we none of us can utter,
Nor indite what we would say,
How we grieve to see you going
Out of Winnipeg to-day,—
You have been a benediction,
You have spent yourself in love,
We are grateful, but the guerdon
Can *alone* be paid above.

The address was as follows:

Dear Lady Nanton:

On this, the occasion of the departure of yourself and family to make your home in another part of Canada, we, as representative of the women of Winnipeg, feel a desire to express to you something of the sense of loss which your going has occasioned throughout the entire city.

The charm of your personality has won for you a warmth of affection among womanhood generally, which is enjoyed by very few.

As we reflect upon the various spheres of woman's activities, we find scarcely any where your absence will not be keenly felt.

In the realm of Art and Music your influence and support have been of inestimable value to the community at large, while your patronage has benefitted and your practical ability has assisted, every worthy effort towards the bettering of living conditions, the raising of public ideals, and the developing of a real spirit of patriotism, and personal service in civic life.

But it is not in the great public movements alone, nor even among your personal friends, that you will be most sadly missed, but in hundreds of humble homes, your removal will be felt as a more personal loss. By your unbounded Christian sympathy, unlimited tact, and unstinted personal effort, you have brought comfort and the light of hope into countless homes darkened and blighted by the great war. Into these homes your presence has come with healing and balm.

While no word or act of ours can adequately express our feelings, we beg you to accept this simple Folio, containing the signatures of a few of the many who would wish you to carry away a token and reminder of their love and gratitude.

To this we would add our heartiest wishes for every true happiness for you and yours in the years to come.

Signed on behalf of
the Women of Winnipeg.

On examination, I found there were forty-one pages of women's signatures from all parts of the city and all classes in the community. These addresses tell their own tale and fittingly close this chapter.

CHAPTER X

CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

HAPPY is the boy who has the care and the training of a good mother, whose counsels and example give the right direction to his life. Nanton's father died when the lad was of tender years. And the testimony is that the mother, exerting herself to provide for her children, kept steadily and lovingly before them the ideals of integrity, industry and honour—ideals which have their foundation in religious conviction. Those of us who have met men of all classes on the frontier can testify to the extraordinary influence of great mothers, whether near at hand or far away, whether living or gone on before.

Augustus Nanton was fortunate in having a mother of this type, who by precept and example had led him from his early years to associate himself with the Anglican Church, of which she herself was a devout member.

I am not of the Communion above mentioned, but all my life I have known and admired the great work of the Anglican Church in the vast spaces of the North West, from the Lakes to the Pacific and from the Boundary Line towards the Arctic Circle. Its stately ritual, its lofty music, its sound doctrine, as well as its refusal to allow its services to be cheaply sensational or irreverent—all these elements, along with the devotion of its members, command for that great Church the serious admiration and appreciation of all right thinking people.

Nanton's early training led him spontaneously into attendance and interest in the Church. He never sought prominence, but the contrary, in the larger courts of the Church, but he was faithful in the congregation and a continuous and liberal giver all his days. And all this was entirely apart from the knowledge he had in common with all men who know history--namely, that the church has not only a spiritual, but an economic value in a community. About the poorest thing some men do is to make light of the Church, whose influence in a community makes their lives and property safe. The world owes far more than it acknowledges to strong men who ally themselves with the Church and give it their constant support.

I know Nanton's personal habits in this regard from his arrival in Winnipeg, for he lived in the same locality for some years. Later, I was minister of a Presbyterian church in Fort Rouge, near St. Luke's Anglican Church, with which Mr. Nanton was then connected. But I thought it well to secure some testimony from men in his own Communion, with whom he was so closely related in church life. Naturally, I turned first of all to that noted man, Archbishop Matheson of Winnipeg, so well known and so beloved, not only in his own diocese of Rupert's Land, but throughout Canada and the English-speaking world. He knew Mr. Nanton from the day of his arrival in Winnipeg all through his life till the end. So I wrote to the Archbishop, and in his note of acknowledgment there was this very fine paragraph:

Regarding Sir Augustus Nanton, I am glad that you are to publish something about his life. He was a most earnest, conscientious and devoted man. I often told him that he worked too hard and that some day he would face a breakdown. While most able and possessed of extremely good judg-

ment, he was as humble as a child and remained so up to the very end. I have missed him greatly, not only as a most helpful churchman, but as a friend.

Following up my further request, the Archbishop sent me the following excellent testimony:

Bishop's Court,
Winnipeg, Man.,
August 16th, 1930.

It is a great pleasure to me to pay tribute to the late Sir Augustus Nanton from the point of view of his churchmanship. He was not only a most devoted and consistent member of the Anglican Church, but a most useful one. His constitutional modesty made him shrink from permitting himself to be elected a delegate to any of the councils of the Church, such as the General, Provincial and Diocesan Synods. This was always a source of great regret to me, for his sane judgment and outstanding business ability would have rendered him a most valuable adviser and counsellor in promoting the general welfare of the church, but his modesty and humility seemed always to make him shun the limelight of public functions and assemblies. As an instance of the way in which he appeared to avoid prominence, I recall an incident illustrative of his attitude. When the late Archbishop MacPhayen passed away I asked Sir Augustus to be a pallbearer at his funeral. His reply was, "Of course I shall appreciate the honour and I thank you for asking me, but surely you can select a much more prominent and deserving representative of the Church than I am to pay this last tribute to a great man."

While, however, the Church lost the benefit of what might have been a preëminent service in the sphere of its councils, the Parish Church which he attended had in Sir Augustus a willing helper in all its undertakings and in the promotion of its various activities. Holy Trinity Church and St. Luke's can bear ample testimony to that. His influence and his generosity in support of the various enterprises of the Parish were assets upon which the congregations could always lean and not in vain. The Rectors of these Churches can testify better than I can to the particulars and the values of the contributions which he made in their aid and maintenance. Speaking as the Archbishop of the Diocese, I can state that, while I did not have Sir Augustus by my side in the councils

of the Church as I had other laymen of his calibre, I enjoyed to the full the benefit of his personal advice, always most cheerfully given, and in all the larger projects of the Church I could always feel that he was loyally at my back with his practical sympathy and support.

When Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton were leaving Winnipeg for Toronto, a dinner was tendered to them in St. Luke's Church Hall. An illuminated address was presented, to which Sir Augustus replied, thanking all warmly for the kind words spoken of Lady Nanton and himself. He said he had been a member of St. Luke's from its beginning and, though going away, he and Lady Nanton would never forget St. Luke's and the friends there.

It may be added that beautiful memorial windows, a chime of seven bells, a lectern and other gifts attest the deep interest taken by Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton in St. Luke's.

The Rector for many years before the passing of Sir Augustus was Canon Bertal Heeney, who is still in charge. Canon Heeney is widely known as a writer, as well as a preacher and a man. When the news of the death of Sir Augustus came from Toronto, Canon Heeney in St. Luke's on Sunday morning, two days before the funeral service, gave the following brief address, which is of permanent value and interest. The Canon spoke as follows:—

It is not often that I break my life-long rule of silence concerning the members of our Church who pass to the great Beyond. Much harm has been done by unwise speaking on such occasions. Our knowledge of one another is limited and therefore our estimates of each other only partially true at best. As a result, we often commend where we should condemn, and we judge harshly when fuller knowledge would compel us to reverse our decision.

Moreover, the Church has many enemies who are ever ready to make capital of Her imperfections. They delight to point

the finger of scorn and say, "Ah yes, there is your Christianity--it commands this man, the real truth of whose life we know" It must, however, be remembered that, if there is danger in speech, there may be injustice in silence. On this occasion an exceptional man has gone and I should fail in my duty were I to lack the courage to speak. Whether it be by speech or by silence I have no desire but to commend the Cause of Christ--to which my own little life is ever more and more devoted.

It is pleasant to reflect that the taking away of this great man was in no sense due to the squandering of his strength in dissipation. On the contrary, his great strength was the servant of his higher faculties and it collapsed honourably at work. This is a cause for congratulation--in this he was a much needed example. He kept his strong body clean and devoted to useful work. Sir Augustus was a man of unusual mental powers. This is conceded. On any Board of Directors he took a leading part. One of his chief mental qualities was a balance of judgment--sanity. It was for this reason that his counsel was so much sought and prized.

He had a reputation for work. In fact, overwork did much to shorten his days. Would to God that more careers were so honourably brought to an end! The troubles of the present in society are due more to men's desire to get money without making it than to any other single cause. The Church taught Europe the gospel of work in the Name of Christ. It must come back to the task of again so teaching, or society will fall to pieces. "Work, for the night is coming" is Her Master's command.

Physical strength, mental powers, and full dedication of them to useful spheres of work--these were characteristics of the man. But not more so than many others. He had a rare sense of duty. He was a vestry-man of St. Luke's for many years and twice held the office of Warden. He stands out in my recollection as a man with a rare sense of duty. I would apologize for troubling so busy a man,--he would say, "But I want to be troubled--it is my duty."

Would to God more young men would learn this lesson! Duty is a sacred thing--and a little lamp God lights in the soul.

Moreover, he had a name for honesty. He made the name of Nanton one to swear by for business integrity. All of us are richer for it--his family, his firm, his city, his country. He stood for business thoroughness, integrity and stability. It was by no mere chance that he prospered. It was not so

generally known that he was a kindly man. I saw this side of his character more perhaps than most people outside his family. He did "consider the poor and needy." Though he was rich and able to pay what might be demanded for pew rents—he was ever the champion of free pews in this Church, and took care that the gifts of the poor should be held in honour. I have heard him say that "fifty cents may represent a large offering". His own giving was generous, but never ostentatious. He also played a large part in the building up of this beautiful property, and was one of the Wardens when the Church House was opened in 1914, and the Rectory purchased.

There was also a great humility in the man, though perhaps many did not see this side of his character. Like the great man he was, it showed itself most in religious matters. I found him anything but self-righteous or pretentious, and often his humble attitude of mind toward God was child-like and touching.

He knew the value of Christianity and of the Church as its exponent. He loved St. Luke's and said often in public and in private—"We are proud of St. Luke's."

He would be the first to acknowledge that character is the greatest asset in life and that the knowledge of Christ is the chief factor in the forming of character. His large ability, inherited tendencies and education combined to form in him one of the strongest and most admirable characters this country has produced.

Sir Augustus has left a name for stability in business institutions, for honest work, for wise venture, for that confidence in the future of the West which invests money and life itself, for loyalty to all that is highest in our social and national ideals. A great example has been given us, a great man has fallen! May God, who calls us to carry on, give us the foresight, the faith, the energy, the courage, the sense of duty, which characterized him!

May his soul rest in Eternal Peace and the comfort of the Holy Spirit strengthen and sustain his devoted wife and family!

As for us, let us go forward with faith and courage, for the night cometh, when no man can work."

Another very well-known Rector in Winnipeg for some years was Archdeacon McElheran of St. Matthews, now Principal of Wycliffe Anglican College in

Toronto. Archdeacon McElheran was greatly beloved by all classes in Winnipeg and was an untiring and deeply sympathetic friend to all in need; also he was regarded as a keen student of human nature. He knew Sir Augustus well and the following tribute comes from him:

It is needless for me to make reference to the standing that Sir Augustus Nanton had in the business world, and I therefore want to speak more particularly regarding his personal contact with people who were in trouble or were less fortunate than he himself had been. He was appealed to by men and women in all walks of life, and he was always found to be worthy of the name given by Bunyan to one of his well-known characters: "Mr. Greatheart." Perhaps there was no other man in the community who, during the War, came into contact with so large a number of individuals requiring advice and assistance. He accepted the most responsible position in the administration of the Patriotic Fund for the City of Winnipeg, and it is not too much to say that it became his chief interest until the work was finished. Every day, with remarkable regularity and punctuality, he went to the office of the Patriotic Fund and gave of his great talents and ability the most sympathetic and distinguished service. He interested himself in the members of soldiers' families in a way that the public scarcely could have believed possible. He carried their burdens, and his heart was always open to their cry. He preserved in a remarkable way the noble grace of tender-heartedness. It will be for this that he will be remembered by the largest number of people. His extraordinary sympathy, his gentleness, his thoughtfulness and consideration brought comfort to thousands, and it is only those who knew him best who realize that his sudden breaking up in health was due in very large measure to the sacrifices, and the self-forgetting service which he rendered, in the anxious days from 1914 to 1919. He had a great love for Canada and the Empire, and to him every active service man had a just claim on the generosity and sympathy of our people. With tact, patience and tenderness he endeavoured to meet that claim.

CHAPTER XI

CLOSING SCENES

SIR AUGUSTUS, Lady Nanton and household left Winnipeg on November 7th, 1924, for the new sphere of work in Toronto, where Sir Augustus was to assume the Presidency of the Dominion Bank, to which office he had been elected in August of that year. This election was a deserved recognition of his great ability and of his intimate knowledge, not only of Canada, but of world conditions.

Winnipeg was loath to part from one so greatly esteemed and many were at the Canadian Pacific station to see Sir Augustus and family away, and to bid them Godspeed.

The day before his leaving Winnipeg, the *Tribune* there, in the course of a fine editorial, said:

Sir Augustus Nanton has won outstanding business success in Winnipeg. He had a marked natural aptitude for the business he founded and fostered—he must have had. But the keynote of his achievement was industry. Of few men could it be more truly said:—

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept
Were toiling upwards in the night."

Sir Augustus Nanton has been toiling from the time he entered his teens. He has had most of the experiences, the trials, the knocks, the disappointments commonly found in the early struggles of a youth unaided by money or influence. If through these storms and tempests that marked the beginning of his career, his ship came home to bestow the usual reward

of sacrifice and effort, that is as we should wish it to be with all our Canadian boys born to opportunity and endowed with the will to exploit it.

Sir Augustus was showing the effects of his prolonged devotion to the work to which he had set his hand in his old home city of Toronto some half a century before. He was returning thither with a highly honourable life record, recognized as a man of pre-eminence in business, as well as one of unswerving integrity and splendid human sympathy with all deserving causes.

He was not so well physically as his friends would have liked, but he addressed himself to his new task with his usual thoroughness and ability. At the Annual Meeting of the Bank, held at the Banking House of the Institution on January 28th, 1925, Sir Augustus took the chair and made a few remarks before introducing the general business. As was most fitting, he made the following fine reference to his predecessor in office, the late Sir Edmund B. Osler. Sir Augustus said:

Gentlemen, you must all share with me the feeling that there is something wanting in this gathering to-day. Two of those whom we have been accustomed to see at our Annual Meetings for many years are not with us--Sir Edmund Osler, who was your Bank President for twenty-three years, and who was interested in the Bank from its inception, died on the 4th day of August last. His great ability, integrity and unfailing attachment to the Dominion Bank in its every activity are too well known to require any comment from me. Up to the last, Sir Edmund gave of his best to this institution and his death has been mourned by every member of the Board, and by every officer of the Bank.

I entered his office on the 11th of December, 1875, and therefore served under him for nearly forty-nine years. On the fortieth anniversary, I telegraphed him, reminding him of the occasion and I received an answer, reading: "Forty years of unbroken friendship without a single misunderstanding or dispute."

Sir Augustus referred also to the death of Mr. James Carruthers of Montreal, for many years a valued Director of the Bank.

He then went on to speak of various matters of special interest, and enlarged upon some of the business doctrines he had not only proclaimed, but practised all his life. In one place, he said: "I think the business outlook for the future is good, provided that every man does his share in improving conditions by hard work, careful living and careful buying." The statement "Every man should do his share" was the result of his own life habit. The partner in the rowboat who said, as already quoted: "Nanton always pulled his weight," paid a great tribute to one who never shirked doing his share. So he could preach this doctrine. Later, in his address, he indicated that it was not good business for us as a nation to trade with any people who would sell to us but would not buy from us. "My feeling," said he, "is that we should strongly advocate trading with those who would trade with us on equal terms. We should buy Canadian goods and British goods and thus build up our country and our Empire." Sir Augustus Nanton was never a partizan in politics, but he regarded this as a matter of business and common sense as well as of sentiment.

Finally, as a lover both of the East and the West it was fitting that he should have expressed himself upon the necessity of unity and coöperation among all parts of the Dominion. These words might have been written to-day for their application still carries full weight. He said:

Eastern and Western Canada must be brought into closer touch with one another through a greater knowledge and understanding of their several problems and viewpoints, and through an increased appreciation of the common bond of

Canadian citizenship which we all enjoy. Canada must remain united, and must draw the bonds of unity tighter than they are to-day if she will achieve the full measure of that great destiny which awaits her.

In connection with that Annual Meeting, there were some specially fine references to the late President and to his incoming successor, Mr. Monroe Grier, K.C., said he had known three generations of the Osler family and made reference to the distinguished men of that name in their several avocations. He then added: "To-day our hearts are warmed when we contemplate that in his place as President we have one whose association with him must, I think, have been closer than a brother." Mr. A. W. Austin said: "While we miss the valuable advice of our late President, it is encouraging to know that in Sir Augustus Nanton we have a worthy and able successor, one who as partner with Sir Edmund Osler, has had a long experience in Western Canada, which will prove of inestimable value to the Dominion Bank."

Going back to the City of his birth, the scene of his school and early business days, and assuming the Presidency of an important financial institution therein, formed a fitting and a striking climax to the notable career of Augustus Nanton. Toronto had known him as a lad, making his own way at a quite early age. It knew him later, not only as the leading man in his vocation in Western Canada, but as one whose high standing was known throughout his own country and beyond. Now it was receiving him back to a place of distinction amongst its ablest citizens.

But his years of incessant endeavour and of burden-bearing for others had taken their toll of his splendid strength. Friends and associates had, for some years, suggested that he should relinquish some portion of his

many responsibilities, but he said that times were difficult in the aftermath of war and he must do his part. One of his associates, a very prominent business man in Montreal, writes me: "He sacrificed himself to his devotion to work and it may be truly said that in this devotion to his work there was a loyalty to his colleagues which to the very last compelled him to continue carrying his share of the load." Others of his intimate business associates who visited Sir Augustus in his sick-room in Toronto, where everything that love and care and skill could do was being done, have spoken to me with manifest emotion of their final meetings with him. They say that he was facing the inevitable with characteristic courage and with equally characteristic thought concerning others. To these business associates he said: "I know you are entrusted with very large responsibilities and duties. I would like to help you with these, but it is ordered otherwise, and I can only say 'Goodbye' and 'God bless you.'" One writes me: "I was greatly moved by his words."

The annual meeting of the Bank above recorded was the last of the kind he attended, though he continued to do what he could even from his house on Castle Frank Road. A trip to Atlantic City seemed to benefit him for a brief space, but the insidious ailment had taken too strong a hold on his system, although his once sound physique resisted the inroad for months. Lady Nanton and some members of the family were constantly with him throughout his illness, and all came to be at his bedside when the end was approaching. He passed away quietly at 8:30 in the morning on April 24th, 1925, to the great grief of those around him and to the profound regret of many throughout Canada and other lands.

It would not be possible to mention in any detail the

cables, telegrams and letters that poured in upon the bereaved household, nor to record even brief extracts from the Press on both sides of the sea. The personal letters from old friends and associates of Sir Augustus were very beautiful and touching in their tributes to his life and work, their own keen sense of loss, and their wholehearted sympathy with Lady Nanton and family.

The Prince of Wales, who had been a guest in the Nanton home in Winnipeg and who had corresponded with Sir Augustus on matters relating to the good work for ex-service men, arrived in Cape Town, South Africa and, seeing the Press notice cabled at once to Lady Nanton, as follows:—

Please accept my deepest sympathy have only to-day heard sad news. (Sgd.) Edward P.

The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Byng of Vimy, Sir Robert Kindersley and other outstanding men cabled, as did many others. Wires came from all directions, from great business firms, from mayors of cities and towns, from companies and individuals. There was such an unmistakable ring of sincerity about all these messages, which had nothing of the stereotyped and formal in their words or manifest meaning, that they must have brought much comfort to the bereaved home. No human can enter into the sacredness of a sorrowing heart, but the praise given to one who has been taken from us, the delicate and unobtrusive, but recognized sympathy of friends always brings some degree of comfort to those who long "for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still."

In Winnipeg, the Press was filled with interviews with leading men in every walk of life expressing sorrow at the passing of one who had been the leading man of the City in many lines for many years. And

these men, as one paper said, had at least the satisfaction of recalling that in that great farewell banquet they had poured out to him the honest, genuine heart felt testimony to his immense influence on the whole life of Western Canada. These men had no real premonition as to the occasion being more than a temporary farewell, for Sir Augustus, though run down, had the strong constitution begotten of a good life. But whether they had or not, those who were nearest and dearest to him could not wish to have inscribed in brass or stone finer tributes than the words which were uttered and applauded when he was yet alive to hear them.

One intimate Winnipeg friend and business associate, Mr. D. C. Coleman, Western Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific, was in Victoria at the time and issued the following testimony before leaving for home to be present at the funeral. Mr. Coleman said:

Augustus Meredith Nanton must always occupy a prominent place in the story of the opening up of Western Canada. During the years when the prairie provinces were passing from the pioneer phases to the present stage of development, he was the unquestionable leader in commerce and finance. He thus helped to form the business standards on which the West is established, and it is a splendid thing for the present and future of these provinces that such leadership should have been held by a man of vision, tolerance and unblemished honour. Sir Augustus regarded every office and connection he held in business as a solemn trust, and gave of himself so ungrudgingly and shouldered so many burdens that in the end he impaired a naturally rugged constitution.

No man who worked with him can ever forget his power of concentration, his phenomenal memory, his clarity of vision and his comprehensive grasp of all branches of industry and finance. His sound judgment, his capacity for work and his breadth of information were accompanied by patience and by a simple and sincere courtesy which transformed every client and every associate into a devoted friend. He and Lady Nanton were intensely interested in charitable and patriotic

work and, in particular, many of our soldiers and sailors have to bless them for their unostentatious generosity. His friends believe that the memory of one so faithful to duty and so helpful to others will long endure.

Amongst organizations, few had such intimate knowledge of Sir Augustus as the Winnipeg Board of Trade. By a standing vote, the members put on record the following resolution:

The Board of Trade marks with deep regret the passing of Sir Augustus Nanton, a citizen of Winnipeg for 43 years.

By his high character, industry, enterprise, integrity and ability, he won the leading place in this community.

He was President, Vice-President, or Director of very many of our successful business institutions, and served the Winnipeg Board of Trade faithfully in many positions, including that of President.

His sympathies and activities were not confined to business, but embraced religious, patriotic and philanthropic objects.

His knowledge, experience and good judgment gave him the confidence, not only of his fellow-citizens, but also of the business world outside of Winnipeg and outside of Canada.

In the times through which we are now passing, we can ill afford to lose his wisdom, sound commonsense and optimism. The Board of Trade expresses its deep sympathy with Lady Nanton and the family in their loss.

The following Resolution was passed by the Board of Directors, and a copy beautifully engrossed and signed by the President and Directors was sent to Lady Nanton:—

It is with deep regret that the Directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company find themselves called upon to record the death on the 24th April, 1925, of their colleague, Sir Augustus M. Nanton.

Sir Augustus Nanton was elected a Director of the Company in May, 1914, and since May, 1923, had been a member of the Executive of the Board.

He was also for some years particularly associated with the administration of the Company's affairs in Western Canada as Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Natural Resources Department.

His service to the Company was at all times marked by a faithful devotion to its interests, his sound judgment and wise counsel being of incalculable value in the deliberations of the Directors, and the Board desires to express in the minutes their sense of the great loss sustained by the Company and by the country through his decease.

It is therefore resolved that the members of the Board deeply deplore the loss by death of their esteemed colleague, Sir Augustus M. Nanton and send the members of the family an expression of their deep sympathy and condolence.

Literally hundreds of newspapers in the Old Country and all across Canada made special allusion to the passing of Sir Augustus, all recognizing the great work he had done for Canada and lamenting the close of his life while still at a comparatively early age. From these we can quote only a very few. A fine paragraph in the *Western Record* says:

Through periods of depression and stress he held to the faith that Canada had a great future. His courage and clear thinking held the balance on many critical occasions in connection with the affairs with which he was identified. On many occasions his patience and serenity, coupled with clarity of vision, raised pessimistic confrères to a higher plane of thought and wiser action. Whatever he did was done with ease and a geniality that strengthened rather than weakened his definite purpose and unyielding determination.

Though he never entered public life as commonly understood, or took active part in politics, his influence permeated the activities of both, while his benevolences were invaluable to the community. Like most truly great men, he was easy of approach and a staunch friend.

The *Calgary Herald* said:

While it might not be uncommon for great business men to have the same kind of ability, Sir Augustus had other gifts less common, personal charm, a distinctive courtesy which won the affection of men intimate with him, and the high esteem of all.

The *Vancouver Sun* in a brief editorial, under the title, "A Great Canadian", indicates how his work will continue. It says:

With the passing of Sir Augustus Nanton, Canada loses a great progressive figure that contributed much to the building of the nation. But as with many other great men, his best and finest work will begin after he is gone. It is not only the actual service that men like Sir Augustus Nanton render to the nation that counts most in the long run. It is the inspiration their work provides for the youth of the country. Written down to the credit of Augustus Nanton are not only his own individual achievements, but also the multitudinous achievements of those hundreds whom his presence and career have stimulated and will stimulate to greater efforts. A young country like Canada needs fine, upstanding figures of big vigorous men more than anything else. It needs traditions of achievement; legends of great accomplishment. Sir Augustus Nanton has enriched the nation's power of character, work and production. He has reached national immortality.

It will be recalled that at the great farewell banquet in Winnipeg, Sir Augustus closed his fine address with the words, "I have lived in Winnipeg for forty years, My wife came here as a child. All our children have been born here. Although I am leaving Winnipeg, we will always feel that our best love, our real home is Winnipeg." It seemed natural therefore that when he passed away in the East, his body should be brought back to rest in the wide west land for which he had done so much during a long period of active service.

In keeping with the unostentatious character of Sir Augustus and the wish of Lady Nanton, the obsequies were made as simple as possible. But in all such cases, and particularly so in this case, the public claim a sort of right to be given some opportunity to manifest their esteem for the one who has been taken, and their sympathy with those who have been bereaved. Floral offerings in great numbers from individuals and

companies came to the house on Castle Frank Road in Toronto. We send flowers, if we remember the origin of the practice, not only to show our appreciation of the one who has gone on, but as a symbol of life. And we turn our cemeteries into parks and garden plots for the same reason. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The flower seed and the bulb have life and so the flowers speak to us of immortality. The Easter lily betokens life in its eternal beauty. Sir Augustus had always been fond of flowers and lawns and trees; and so in Toronto, and again at the service in Winnipeg, the multitude of flowers was resplendent with a message of life. In Toronto, the service was held in St. Simon's Anglican Church, conducted by the Rev. F. H. Brewin, assisted by Rev. N. C. Wallace, the Bishop of Toronto pronouncing the benediction at the close. In the large congregation were very prominent men from many walks in life. The Governor-General was represented and the Lieut.-Governor of Ontario was present in person.

The Canadian Pacific Railway furnished a special funeral train to Winnipeg, accompanied by Mr. Grant Hall, the well-known Vice-President of the Company, and Mr. J. J. Scully, General Manager. When the train reached Winnipeg on Monday morning there was a large crowd at the station, representing all classes of people, who stood with bared heads while the family left the train. The casket was conveyed to the home on Roslyn Road and was then moved to St. Luke's Church on Tuesday, where the body was to lie in state until the hour of the service in the afternoon, as great numbers wished to pay their last respects. The honorary pall-bearers at St. Luke's were old friends and associates of Sir Augustus, namely F. L. Patton,

George W. Allan, P. L. Naismith, (Calgary), Hugh F. Osler, Walter T. Kirby, Sir Hugh John Macdonald and T. R. Deacon.

On Sunday previous to the day of the funeral, the morning service in St. Luke's Church had been in memory of Sir Augustus. The Rector, Canon Bertal Heeney, conducted the service. At this Sunday morning service, Canon Heeney delivered the very able and very beautiful address which appears in an earlier chapter of this book. The whole service was impressive.

Flags were at half-mast all over Winnipeg, and many of the business places were closed for the afternoon when the funeral of Sir Augustus took place on the following Tuesday at 2.30 from St. Luke's Church to St. John's Cemetery. The Church could not accommodate all who desired to be present at the service, and thousands were on the streets nearby.

At the opening of the service in St. Luke's Church appropriate hymns were played on the organ, while the tolling of the Church bells lent great solemnity and impressiveness to the occasion.

The staff of Osler, Hammond and Nanton sent a guard of honour to the church, who remained there with their beloved "Chief" from ten o'clock in the morning. The people came in throngs after the opening of the doors. After the noon hour, there was a continuous stream of people passing by the casket and many placed thereon their humble floral offerings, realizing they had lost a loving friend.

The Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts stood at attention outside the Church, lining the walks.

The service was conducted by Canon Heeney, assisted by Archbishop Matheson, Archdeacon Fortin and Archdeacon McElheran. The dominant note

throughout was not one of sadness but of triumph, as befitting the record of a man who had done his duty courageously and had been promoted to Higher Service.

The street car service was silent for five minutes in tribute to the memory of the former President of the Company. A striking evidence of the esteem in which Sir Augustus was held by the Winnipeg Electric Railway and Manitoba Power Company was seen in the attendance in a body of some 600 of their employees, representing all departments, lining both sides of Nassau Street from River Avenue to Roslyn Road. All the way of a few miles to the cemetery, respectful crowds stood with uncovered heads as the cortège passed. The city for which Sir Augustus had done so much and where he had spent the great, strong active years of his life was greatly moved with emotion that day.

The churchyard at St. John's Cathedral is a Westminster Abbey to Western Canada. To read over the monuments and gravestones is to read, in a great sense, the history of the country. Whosoever comes thither is in a goodly company, surrounded by the resting-places of great and noble men and women who did their share in building up a new land on foundations of righteousness. Here lie some of the earliest white settlers who began to demonstrate the possibility of a granary for the Empire west of the Great Lakes. Here are many of the famous missionaries, teachers and leaders, archbishops, bishops, college professors, school teachers and others who kept alive the torch of religion and education in a new country. Here rest explorers and travellers, traders in the great fur companies, who were exemplars of honour and integrity in all their work. Here are the resting-places of judges,

premiers, public men in various walks of life. Here too are the splendid men and women who toiled that others might live in comfort as the country advanced through the efforts of the pioneers. Into this great company, in the hallowed God's acre, his friends and a great concourse of sorrowing people bore the body of Sir Augustus Meredith Nanton that spring day. No one better than he had understood how to carry on the work which the forefathers of the West had begun. No one honoured the memory of those who rested there more than did this courteous, kindly knight, who had done much to make the way of life easier for their successors. Here he would rest in the British soil he loved, under the ensign which stands for the freedom of men. Here the youth of our country may stand by his monument and learn the way of industry, integrity and love which leads to permanent success. Here let this brave, gentle, generous and genuine friend rest until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Years ago I saw the fishermen go out in the evening from the mouth of the Fraser River, with lights on each little boat, and the fishermen talking together as they went out on the gulf. They were separated in the darkness, drifting farther apart till they could not see or hear each other in the night. But in the daybreak, they all met again on the shore. So it is in this human voyage over the sea of life. The way grows dark and we lose sight of each other. But friends who are parted at midnight will meet in the eternal daybreak beyond which there is no night.

This book may be closed appropriately with the exquisite and comprehensive tribute paid to Sir Augustus by Mr. F. Stanley Long, a prominent man of business then in Winnipeg, now in London. This tribute, which is a unique summing up of a remarkable

life, first appeared in the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, signed 'F. S. L.' It has been copied extensively into the Press on both sides of the sea, and reads as follows:

Nature is not prodigal of her best. At intervals of her own good time she unites in one of her sons qualities of heart and mind and soul that make for greatness. At rarer intervals she blends and balances these qualities, and gives to a generation, to a country, her supreme gift—her best. Such a gift to a restless generation, to a country in transition, was Sir Augustus Meredith Nanton.

This courteous knight, this humble approachable gentleman, left few spheres of usefulness untouched, and touched none that he did not elevate and adorn. In a pioneering generation, diligent in his business, he stood before kings. In the strenuous ardour of his heart he fashioned the fabric of a new country. He loved justice, directed his work in truth, and left his code for a heritage, an enduring monument. He will abide in the memory of a people as Western Canada's great man.

We have seen him grapple with baffling complex problems of finance and industry, committing them to the alembic of a brain as clear as crystal, to expound them, through the medium of his own simplicity, as simple questions. We have seen him lift at once out of the sordid and commonplace the hagglings and barginings of men, investing them with the dignity of his own high principle, often with the romance of his own enthusiasm. We have seen his great heart burst through a concentrated business exterior, charging the atmosphere about him with humanity and kindness. We have seen the fervour of his soul striving with unfairness, injustice, oppression, finding nothing more excellent in the life of a man than truth, justice, temperance and charity.

Finally, we beheld him in the prime and fullness of his years "a Statesman, a Roman, a King," one who took his post like a soldier, awaiting the bugle that should sound his recall, in all readiness to obey, needing no man's testimony.

Blest is the generation, the country that has seen and known him; and blest the people that can mourn for Canada's Greatheart.

